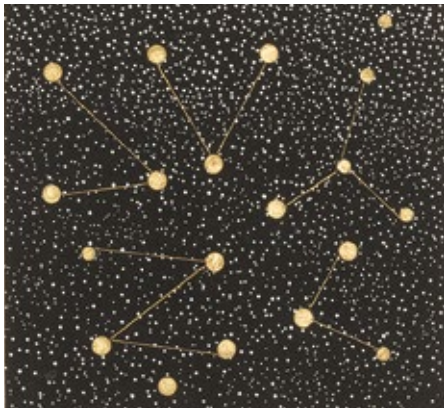
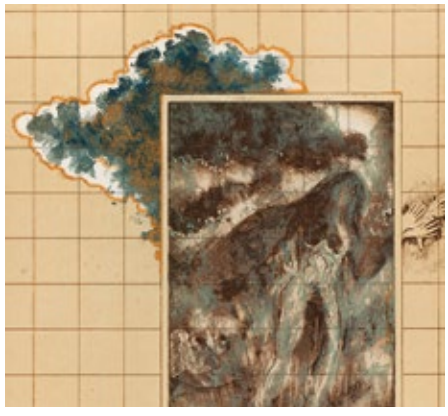


THE SOUTH ASIA EDIT

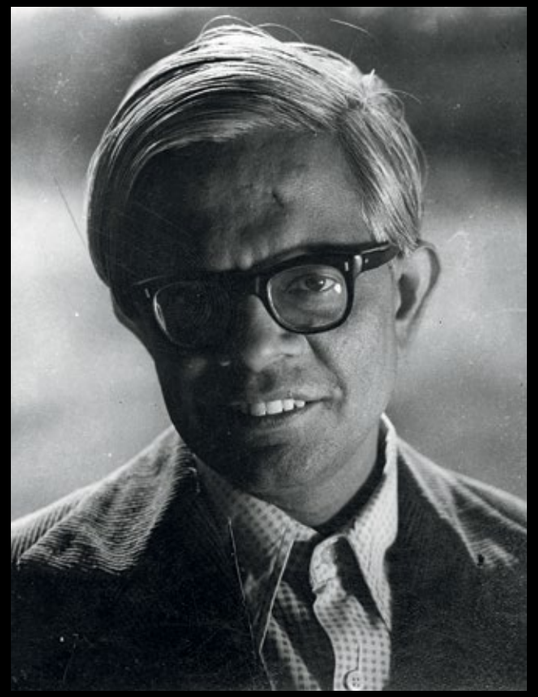


LONDON
13 JULY – 7 AUGUST 2026

Sotheby's EST. 1744

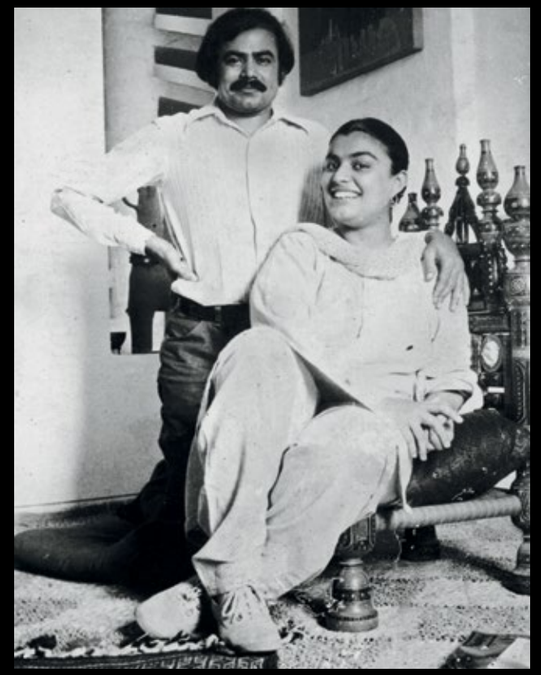
Mohan Samant, *Dancing Angels* (detail)

Mohan Samant
1924 - 2004



Bhupen Khakhar
1934 - 2003

Zarina
1937 - 2020



Zahoor ul Akhlaq
1941 - 1999

Sheherezade Alam
1948 - 2022

Zarina, *Tasbih* (detail)

THE SOUTH ASIA EDIT

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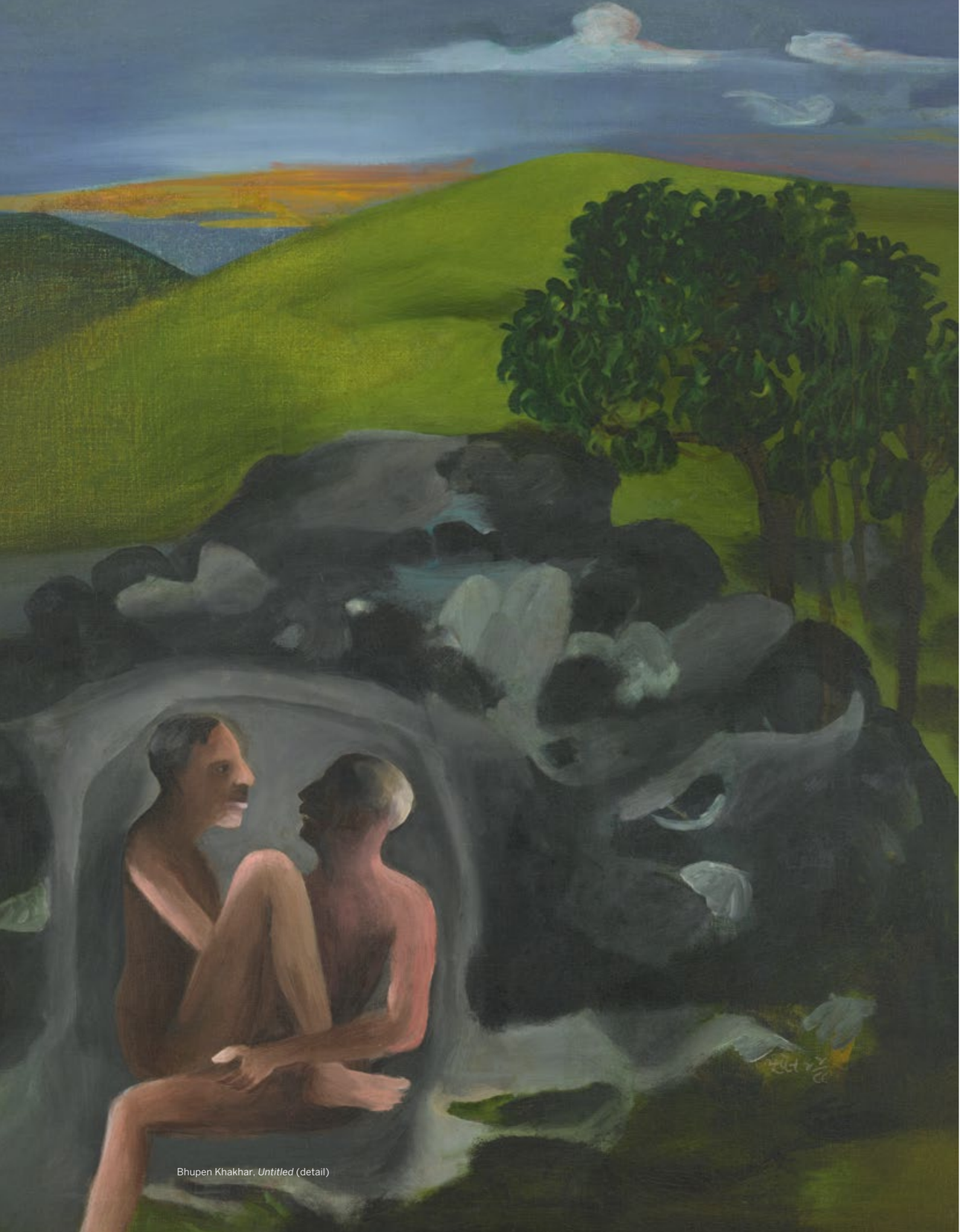

Bhupen Khakhar, *Untitled* (detail)

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Zahoor ul Akhlaq, *Untitled* (detail)

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SHEHEREZADE ALAM

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT
THE PROPERTY IN THESE
EXHIBITIONS, PLEASE VISIT
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Works by Sheherezade Alam

Vases by Sheherezade Alam (detail)

THE SOUTH ASIA EDIT

The South Asia Edit celebrates six distinct voices in the story of modern and contemporary South Asian art: Francis Newton Souza, Mohan Samant, Bhupen Khakhar, Zarina, Zahoor ul Akhlaq and Sheherezade Alam. Bringing together remarkable, rarely seen works from across their *œuvres*, this series of focused exhibitions presents a curated capsule of art from the region and its diaspora.

The exhibitions feature important sequences of works, whether Souza's Christian iconography of the 1980s, Samant's celebrated *Music & Dance* series, Khakhar's experimental printmaking of the 1990s and early 2000s, or Zarina's explorations in gold leaf. The South Asia Edit also spotlights the pioneering Pakistani artist couple Akhlaq and Alam, presenting Akhlaq's paintings in conversation with Alam's timeless ceramics.

Drawing on personal themes and artistic inspiration as far-reaching as Urdu calligraphy and British Pop Art, these six artists resist easy categorisation. Their practices transcend any singular style or unifying movement, and yet, when considered collectively, their careers, travels and influences speak to the broader cosmopolitan artistic milieu of the period. Born between 1924 and 1948, their training spans seminal art schools and groups of post-Independence India and Pakistan. In keeping with the spirit of creative freedom and international modernism that defined the era, they travelled widely, studying and pursuing fellowships and residencies abroad. Their paths scattered from their homes in Bombay, Baroda, Aligarh and Lahore, to London, Paris, Rome, Bonn, Bangkok, Tokyo, New York and beyond.

The artists featured in The South Asia Edit occupy a special place within Sotheby's history. Through a series of landmark sales, exhibitions and institutional placements, Sotheby's has played a leading role in advancing international recognition for Souza, Khakhar, Samant and Zarina, and today holds auction records for all four artists. This project reflects this continued commitment to presenting rigorous and scholarly examinations of artists whose significance extends well beyond the market.

The paintings by Souza are drawn from the Alkazi Collection of Art, one of the most important collections of the artist's work, and of modern Indian art more broadly. The exhibition brings together a select group of paintings that have remained largely unseen since entering the collection, serving as a curtain raiser to a broader exploration of the Alkazi Collection in the years to come.

In the same spirit, Sotheby's is partnering with Jhaveri Contemporary on the dual presentation of artist couple, Akhlaq and Alam. They first met in London in the summer of 1968 and this exhibition reunites their work in the city nearly sixty years later. A rare opportunity to see these artists' diverging approaches side-by-side, this presentation celebrates two important figures in the history of Pakistani modern art.

Taken together, these exhibitions offer a series of encounters with some of the most compelling artistic practices to emerge from South Asia in the twentieth century.

Crossing the Muddy Waters (detail)

MOHAN SAMANT

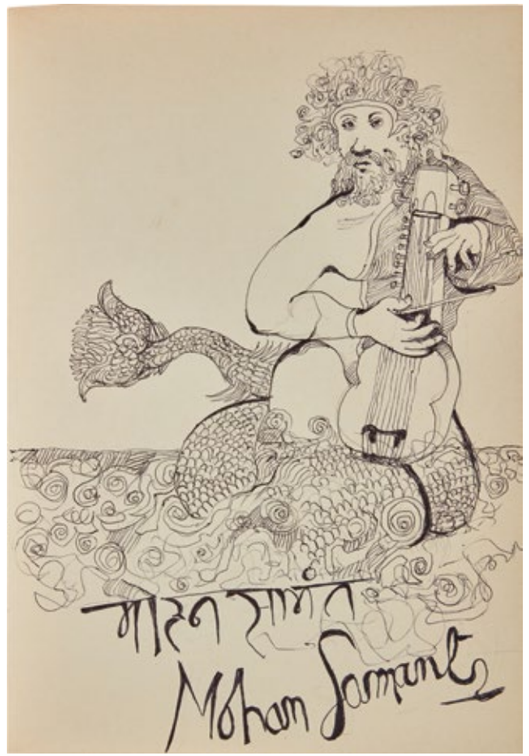
1924–2004

"I have long suspected that Mohan Samant was the missing link in the evolutionary nature of contemporary art in India. A dislocated, but never disoriented, pioneer."

Ranjit Hoskote

Celestial bodies, musicians, dancers, snake charmers and gods: the many characters of Mohan Samant's imagination jostle, float and flicker within his whimsical, multi-dimensional paintings. His artistic inspiration spanned centuries, from Egyptian hieroglyphs and Mughal miniature painting to the modernists Picasso and Matisse. Guided by the creative freedom of 60s and 70s New York and his personal music practice, Samant tirelessly experimented with paint, paper cut-outs, wire and sand to create otherworldly portraits and tableaus. Executed between 1979 and 2003, the remarkable collection of paintings on display at Sotheby's belong to Samant's seminal *Music & Dance* series.

Mohan and Jill Samant at home, 1990s
Image Courtesy The Estate of Mohan Samant



Self-portrait by Mohan Samant - *Merman Playing Sarangi*

Drawing on music, performance and mythology, this series stands as the defining chapter of Samant's *œuvre*. The works synthesise the qualities for which the painter is most celebrated: rhythmic composition, inventive material experimentation and theatrical figuration. The iconic selection featured at Sotheby's was part of Samant's personal collection and has been preserved by the artist's estate since his death in 2004. Rarely seen together, this exhibition is an opportunity to encounter the artist's most important and ambitious body of work.

Samant's lifelong devotion to the *sarangi* finds expression in *Sarangi Nawaz* (2002), where a lone, spectral musician plays the artist's beloved instrument. In *Masked Dance Drama* (1990), characters from the *Ramayana* appear within a vivid, stage-like composition, while the monumental *Dancing Angels* (1988) epitomises the multi-layered complexity of Samant's mature practice.

Despite an early affiliation with the Bombay Progressive Artists' Group and three decades spent in the vibrant creative environment of New York, Samant's style stands totally apart from his contemporaries. The present works are a testament to the originality of his vision and to the qualities that led art critic Ranjit Hoskote to describe him as "a one-man avant-garde." (R. Hoskote, M. Sirhandi, and J. Wechsler, *Mohan Samant: Paintings*, Mapin Publishing Pvt. Ltd., Ahmedabad, 2013, p. 16)

Born in Bombay in 1924, Mohan Samant studied at the Sir J. J. School of Art before joining the Bombay Progressive Artists' Group in 1952. Following a Rockefeller Fellowship to New York in 1959, he developed a singular artistic language that drew on painting, collage, sculpture and music. Today, his work is held in major public collections including Tate, London; Museum of Modern Art and Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C; and National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi.

Sarangi Nawaz (2002)

1

MOHAN SAMANT

1924-2004

Masked Dance Drama

Acrylic, oil, wire and mixed media on canvas

Signed and dated in Devanagari and bearing label on reverse: 'Masked Dance Drama / 1990 68 x 70 in. / Acrylic, oil and wire on canvas / Catalog # 9011 / Mohan Samant'

172.5 x 178 cm. (68 x 70 in.)

Executed in 1990

LITERATURE

R. Hoskote, M. Sirhandi, and J. Wechsler, *Mohan Samant: Paintings*, Mapin Publishing Pvt. Ltd., Ahmedabad, 2013, illustration p. 280 & 461

2

MOHAN SAMANT

1924-2004

Asurabani Pala

Oil, acrylic, paper cut-outs, sand, wire and mixed media on canvas

Signed and dated 'MOHAN / SAMANT / 84' on reverse and further bearing labels on reverse of frame backboard: '147 / Asurabani Pala, 1985 / Oil, acrylic, paper, sand, and wire on canvas / Estate of Mohan Samant / For exhibition at / The Nehru Centre, London, October 2013' and 'Asurabani Pala 1985 / Oil, acrylic, paper, sand and wire on canvas / 30 x 24.5 in. Catalog # 8503 / Mohan Samant / 26 East 22nd Street. New York, NY 10010'

76 x 61.7 cm. (29 7⁄8 x 24 1⁄4 in.)

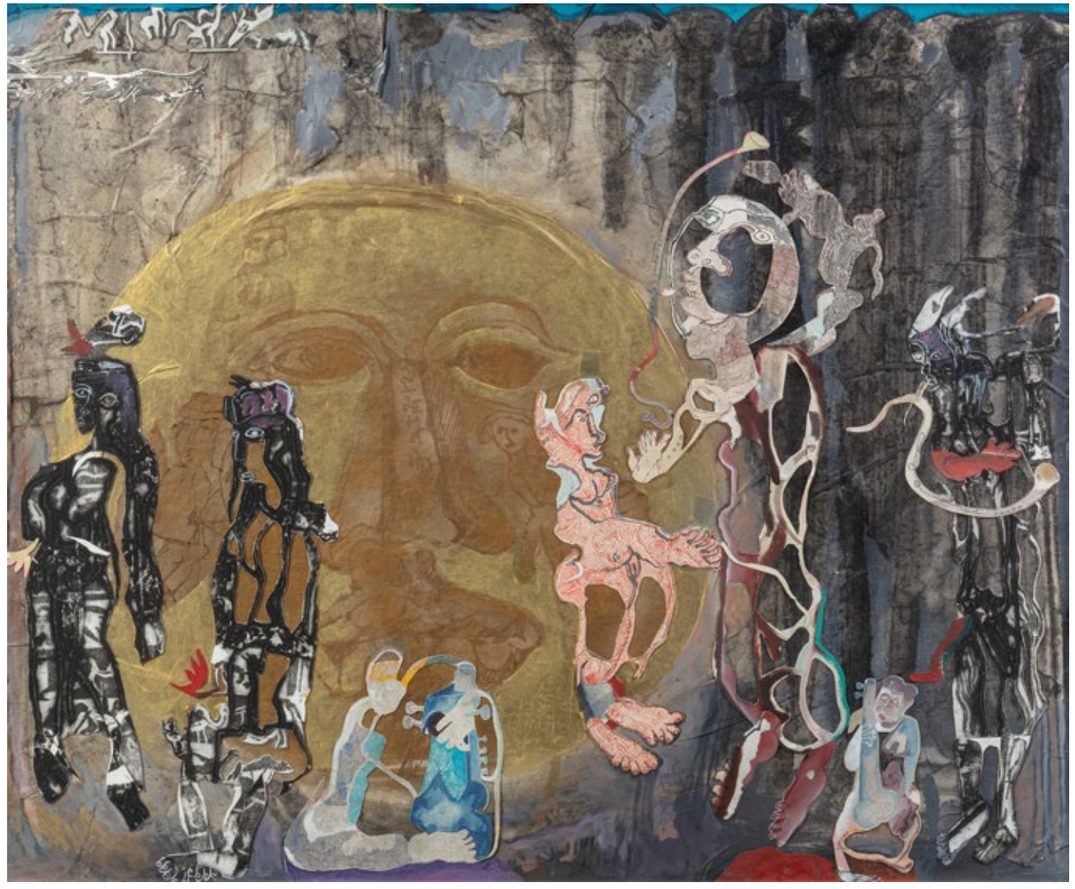
Executed between 1984-5

EXHIBITED

London, The Nehru Centre, *Mohan Samant: Paintings*, 14 - 18 October 2013
Paris, France-Amériques, *Mohan Samant: Paintings, Music & Dance Series*, 14 October 2014
Paris, Église de la Madeleine, *Mohan Samant*, 22 March - 8 April 2016

LITERATURE

R. Hoskote, M. Sirhandi, and J. Wechsler, *Mohan Samant: Paintings*, Mapin Publishing Pvt. Ltd., Ahmedabad, 2013, illustration p. 99 & 456
Mohan Samant, exhibition catalogue, Église de la Madeleine, Paris, 2016, illustration unpaginated



3

MOHAN SAMANT

1924-2004

Moon Dancers

Watercolour, paper cut-outs, felt tip and mixed media on paper laid on board

Signed and dated in Devanagari on reverse and further bearing label on reverse of frame backboard: '201 / Moon Dancers, 1992 / Watercolor and paper cutouts on paper / Estate of Mohan Samant / For exhibition at / The Nehru Centre, London, October 2013'. Further bearing labels affixed to reverse: '9212 / T-3 / MOON DANCERS' and 'MOON DANCERS / 34 x 41.5 / W/C + P.C. O.U.P.'

85.5 x 104.5 cm. (33 5⁄8 x 41 1⁄8 in.)

Executed in 1992

EXHIBITED

London, The Nehru Centre, *Mohan Samant: Paintings*, 14 - 18 October 2013
Paris, France-Amériques, *Mohan Samant: Paintings, Music & Dance Series*, 14 October 2014
Paris, Église de la Madeleine, *Mohan Samant*, 22 March - 8 April 2016

LITERATURE

R. Hoskote, M. Sirhandi, and J. Wechsler, *Mohan Samant: Paintings*, Mapin Publishing Pvt. Ltd., Ahmedabad, 2013, illustration p. 123, 282 & 465
Mohan Samant, exhibition catalogue, Église de la Madeleine, Paris, 2016, illustration unpaginated

Mohan Samant pictured with *Dancing Angels* (right)
at home, early 2000s
Image Courtesy The Estate of Mohan Samant

4

MOHAN SAMANT

1924-2004

Dancing Angels

Acrylic, oil, sand, spackle and wire on canvas

Signed and inscribed 'THIS IS THE PROPERTY OF / MOHAN SAMANT AND JILLIAN SAMANT / 26 E. 22ND ST #9 / NEW YORK, NY 10010 / (212) 254 – 9377 / Mohan Samant' and further bearing labels on reverse: 'Title: *Dancing Angels* / Date of completion: 1988 / Medium: Acrylic, oil, sand, spackle and / wire on / raw canvas / Size: 70 x 90.5 x 2.25 ins. / Artist: Mohan Samant / Meghdoot / 16 Samant Wadi / Goregaon (East) / Mumbai 400 063 / Telephone 873-1604/1971 / Fax: 873-4332'

176.2 x 229.2 cm. (69 ⅜ x 90 ¼ in.)

Executed in 1988

EXHIBITED

Mumbai, Birla Academy of Art and Culture, *Solo exhibition*, 1997
Mumbai, Jehangir Art Gallery, *Solo exhibition*, 2000
Mumbai, Jehangir Nicholson Gallery, *Mohan Samant: Paintings*, 11 October 2013 - 10 February 2014

LITERATURE

R. Hoskote, M. Sirhandi and J. Wechsler, *Mohan Samant: Paintings*, Mapin Publishing Pvt. Ltd., Ahmedabad, 2013, illustration p. 105, 236, 238 & 459

5

MOHAN SAMANT

1924-2004

Kathakali Dancer

Oil, spackle, wire and mixed media on canvas

Titled and inscribed on labels affixed to the reverse: '9001 176 / KATHAKALI DANCER / 60 X 68 / (FROM CELLAR.) E 7-5' and '9001 KATHAKALI / DANCER / 60 X 68 / E 7-5'

171.5 x 152.5 cm. (67 ½ x 60 in.)

Executed in 1990

LITERATURE

R. Hoskote, M. Sirhandi, and J. Wechsler, *Mohan Samant: Paintings,* Mapin Publishing Pvt. Ltd., Ahmedabad, 2013, illustration p. 315 and 461

6

MOHAN SAMANT

1924-2004

Sarangi Nawaz

Watercolour, acrylic, pen, pencil and mixed media on paper

Signed in Devanagari and dated '2002' upper right and further signed in Devanagari and dated '002' lower centre. Further bearing label on reverse of frame backboard: '290 / Sarangi Nawaz, 2002 / Acrylic and watercolor on paper / Estate of Mohan Samant / For exhibition at / The Nehru Centre, London, October 2013'. Further bearing labels affixed to the reverse: 'F021S T2-1 / SARANGI NAWAZ / $7,000-' and 'LOW 290 / T-1 / D 0215'

121 x 63 cm. (47 ⅝ x 24 ⅜ in.)

Executed in 2002

EXHIBITED

London, The Nehru Centre, *Mohan Samant: Paintings*, 14 - 18 October 2013
Paris, France-Amériques, *Mohan Samant: Paintings, Music & Dance Series*, 14 October 2014
Paris, Église de la Madeleine, *Mohan Samant*, 22 March - 8 April 2016

LITERATURE

R. Hoskote, M. Sirhandi, and J. Wechsler, *Mohan Samant: Paintings*, Mapin Publishing Pvt. Ltd., Ahmedabad, 2013, illustration p. 160, 307 & 480
Mohan Samant, exhibition catalogue, Église de la Madeleine, Paris, 2016, illustration unpaginated and cover (detail)

7

MOHAN SAMANT

1924-2004

Elusive Ragini Lalita Gouri

Watercolour, pastel, pen and mixed media on paper

Signed in Devanagari and dated '02' upper left and further bearing label on reverse of frame backboard: '292 / Elusive Ragini Lalita Gouri, 20021. / Watercolor and pen and ink on paper / Estate of Mohan Samant / For exhibition at / The Nehru Centre, London, October 2013'

125.2 x 91.3 cm. (49 ¼ x 36 in.)

Executed in 2002

EXHIBITED

London, The Nehru Centre, *Mohan Samant: Paintings*, 14 - 18 October 2013
Paris, France-Amériques, *Mohan Samant: Paintings, Music & Dance Series*, 14 October 2014
Paris, Église de la Madeleine, *Mohan Samant*, 22 March - 8 April 2016

LITERATURE

R. Hoskote, M. Sirhandi, and J. Wechsler, *Mohan Samant: Paintings*, Mapin Publishing Pvt. Ltd., Ahmedabad, 2013, illustration p. 161 & 480
Mohan Samant, exhibition catalogue, Église de la Madeleine, Paris, 2016, illustration unpaginated

8

MOHAN SAMANT

1924-2004

Noon Fiesta

Watercolour, pastel, felt tip, pencil and mixed media on paper

Signed and dated in Devanagari lower right and further bearing label on reverse of frame backboard: '256 / Noon Fiesta, 1999 / Watercolor on paper / Estate of Mohan Samant / For exhibition at / The Nehru Centre, London, October 2013'. Further bearing labels affixed to the reverse: 'Fiesta with Dancing Girl 1999 / 48 x 35 in. / Water color on paper / Catalog No. 9901 / Mohan Samant / 26 East 22nd Street #9 / New York, NY 10010-6107' and 'LOW 256 / T-9. / ID 9901'

120.2 x 88.2 cm. (47 ⅜ x 34 ¾ in.)

Executed in 1999

EXHIBITED

London, The Nehru Centre, *Mohan Samant: Paintings*, 14 - 18 October 2013
Paris, France-Amériques, *Mohan Samant: Paintings, Music & Dance Series*, 14 October 2014
Paris, Église de la Madeleine, *Mohan Samant*, 22 March - 8 April 2016

LITERATURE

R. Hoskote, M. Sirhandi, and J. Wechsler, *Mohan Samant: Paintings*, Mapin Publishing Pvt. Ltd., Ahmedabad, 2013, illustration p. 289, 318 & 474
Mohan Samant, exhibition catalogue, Église de la Madeleine, Paris, 2016, illustration unpaginated

9

MOHAN SAMANT

1924-2004

Crossing the Muddy Waters

Watercolour, pastel, felt tip, pen, paper cut-outs and mixed media on paper

Signed and dated in Devanagari upper left. Further bearing label on reverse of frame backboard: '250 / Crossing the Muddy Waters, 1998 / Watercolor on paper / Estate of Mohan Samant / For exhibition at / The Nehru Centre, London, October 2013'. Further bearing label affixed to reverse: '9814 T-15 / CROSSING THE / MUDDY WATERS'

185 x 89.7 cm. (72 ¾ x 35 ¼ in.)

Executed in 1998

EXHIBITED

London, The Nehru Centre, *Mohan Samant: Paintings*, 14 - 18 October 2013
Paris, France-Amériques, *Mohan Samant: Paintings, Music & Dance Series*, 14 October 2014
Paris, Église de la Madeleine, *Mohan Samant*, 22 March - 8 April 2016

LITERATURE

R. Hoskote, M. Sirhandi, and J. Wechsler, *Mohan Samant: Paintings*, Mapin Publishing Pvt. Ltd., Ahmedabad, 2013, illustration p. 27, 139, 287 & 473

10

MOHAN SAMANT

1924-2004

Family of Snake Charmers

Watercolour, felt tip, pen, paper cut-outs and mixed media on paper

Bearing label on reverse of frame backboard: '251 / Family of Snake Charmers, 1998 / Watercolor on paper / Estate of Mohan Samant / For exhibition at / The Nehru Centre, London, October 2013'. Further bearing label affixed to reverse: '9815 T-16 / FAMILY OF / SNAKE CHARMERS'

182 x 89.2 cm. (71 ⅝ x 35 ⅛ in.)

Executed in 1998

EXHIBITED

London, The Nehru Centre, *Mohan Samant: Paintings*, 14 - 18 October 2013
Paris, France-Amériques, *Mohan Samant: Paintings, Music & Dance Series*, 14 October 2014
Paris, Église de la Madeleine, *Mohan Samant*, 22 March - 8 April 2016

LITERATURE

R. Hoskote, M. Sirhandi, and J. Wechsler, *Mohan Samant: Paintings*, Mapin Publishing Pvt. Ltd., Ahmedabad, 2013, illustration p. 288 & 473
Mohan Samant, exhibition catalogue, Église de la Madeleine, Paris, 2016, illustration unpaginated

11

MOHAN SAMANT

1924-2004

Untitled

Watercolour, pastel, felt tip and mixed media on paper

120.5 x 62.8 cm. (47 ½ x 24 ¾ in.)

Executed *circa* 1997

LITERATURE

R. Hoskote, M. Sirhandi, and J. Wechsler, *Mohan Samant: Paintings*, Mapin Publishing Pvt. Ltd., Ahmedabad, 2013, illustration p. 470

12

MOHAN SAMANT

1924-2004

Masked Dancers from Easter Island

Watercolour, pastel and mixed media on paper

119.4 x 78.7 cm. (47 x 31 in.)

Executed in 2003

LITERATURE

R. Hoskote, M. Sirhandi, and J. Wechsler, *Mohan Samant: Paintings*, Mapin Publishing Pvt. Ltd., Ahmedabad, 2013, illustration p. 177, 295 & 299

13

MOHAN SAMANT

1924-2004

Blind Singer with Swaramandala

Watercolour, pastel, pencil and mixed media on paper

Signed in Devanagari lower left and bearing label on reverse of frame backboard: '274 / Blind Singer with Swaramandala, 2001 / Watercolor on paper / Estate of Mohan Samant / For exhibition at / The Nehru Centre, London, October 2013'. Further bearing labels affixed to the reverse: '0108 T-13 / BLIND SINGER...' and 'LOW 274 / T-13 / ID 0108'

126 x 88.5 cm. (49 ½ x 34 ¾ in.)

Executed in 2001

EXHIBITED

London, The Nehru Centre, *Mohan Samant: Paintings*, 14 - 18 October 2013
Paris, France-Amériques, *Mohan Samant: Paintings, Music & Dance Series*, 14 October 2014
Paris, Église de la Madeleine, *Mohan Samant*, 22 March - 8 April 2016

LITERATURE

R. Hoskote, M. Sirhandi, and J. Wechsler, *Mohan Samant: Paintings*, Mapin Publishing Pvt. Ltd., Ahmedabad, 2013, illustration p. 149, 151, 309 & 477

14

MOHAN SAMANT

1924-2004

Musicians

Watercolour, felt tip, paper cut-outs and mixed media on paper

Signed and indistinctly dated in Devanagari lower right and further bearing label on reverse of frame backboard: '262 / Musicians, 1999 / Watercolor on paper / Estate of Mohan Samant / For exhibition at / The Nehru Centre, London, October 2013'. Further bearing labels affixed to the reverse: '9926 MUSICIANS / $4,000' and 'LOW 262 / DF-2 / ID 992[...]'

55 x 75.5 cm. (21 ⅝ x 29 ¾ in.)

Executed *circa* 1999

EXHIBITED

London, The Nehru Centre, *Mohan Samant: Paintings*, 14 - 18 October 2013
Paris, France-Amériques, *Mohan Samant: Paintings, Music & Dance Series*, 14 October 2014
Paris, Église de la Madeleine, *Mohan Samant*, 22 March - 8 April 2016

LITERATURE

R. Hoskote, M. Sirhandi, and J. Wechsler, *Mohan Samant: Paintings*, Mapin Publishing Pvt. Ltd., Ahmedabad, 2013, illustration p. 475
Mohan Samant, exhibition catalogue, Église de la Madeleine, Paris, 2016, illustration unpaginated

15

MOHAN SAMANT

1924-2004

Musical Evening at Home

Watercolour, felt tip, ink and paper cut-outs on a textured background

Bearing labels on reverse of frame backboard: '89 / Musical Evening at Home, 1979 / Mixed media and paper cutouts on a textured / Estate of Mohan Samant / For exhibition at / The Nehru Centre, London, October 2013' and 'Musical Evening at Home 1979 / Mixed media and paper cuttings against a / textured background / 28 x 40 in. Catalog # 7902 / Mohan Samant / 26 East 22nd Street. New York, NY 10010'. Further bearing label affixed to reverse: 'LOW 89 / ID 7802'

70 x 100.5 cm. (27 ½ x 39 ⅝ in.)

Executed in 1979

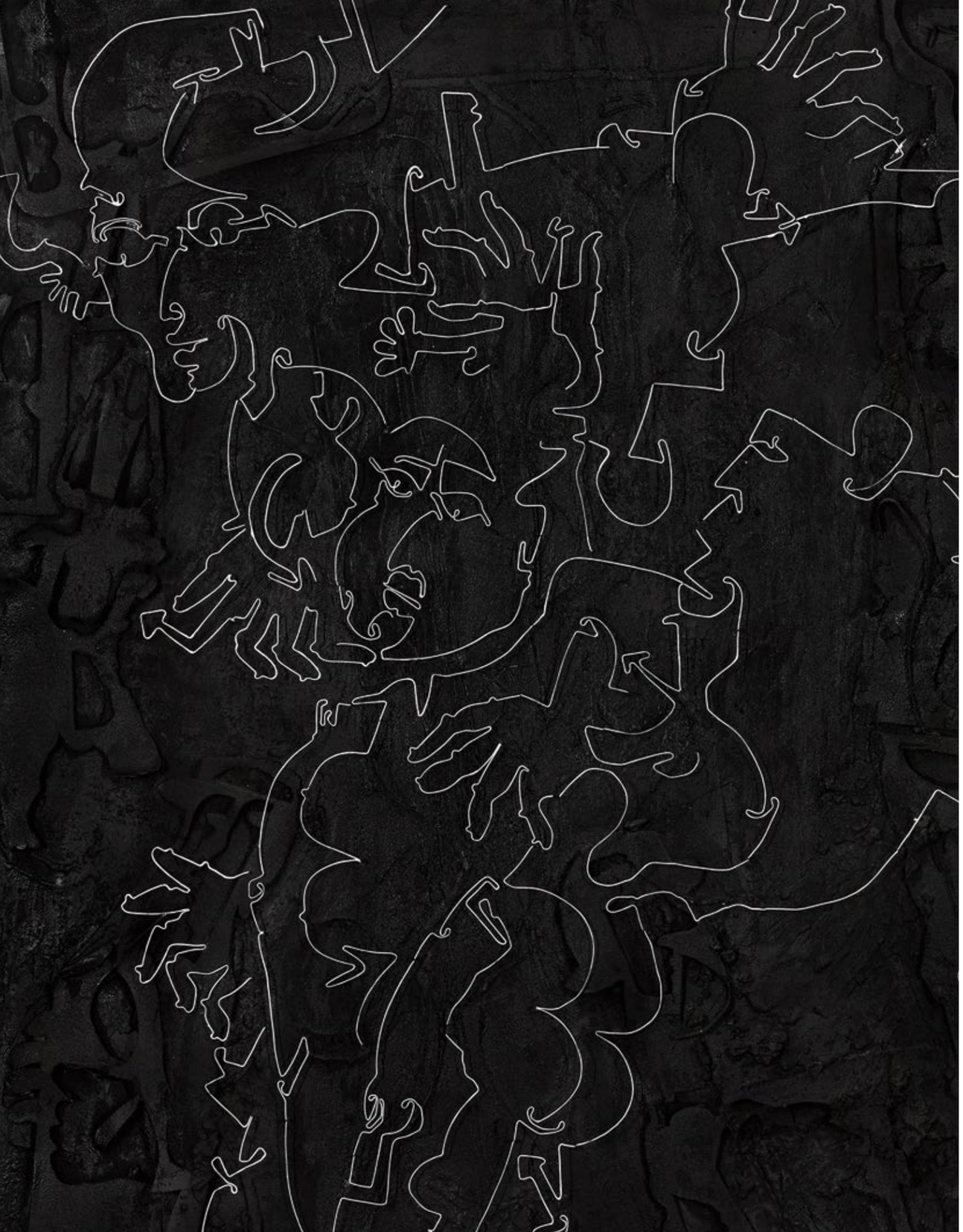
EXHIBITED

London, The Nehru Centre, *Mohan Samant: Paintings*, 14 - 18 October 2013
Paris, France-Amériques, *Mohan Samant: Paintings, Music & Dance Series*, 14 October 2014
Paris, Église de la Madeleine, *Mohan Samant*, 22 March - 8 April 2016

LITERATURE

R. Hoskote, M. Sirhandi, and J. Wechsler, *Mohan Samant: Paintings*, Mapin Publishing Pvt. Ltd., Ahmedabad, 2013, illustration p. 69, 306 & 446
Mohan Samant, exhibition catalogue, Église de la Madeleine, Paris, 2016, illustration unpaginated

This artwork has generously been loaned to the exhibition



16

MOHAN SAMANT

1924-2004

Sufi Dancers

Oil, paper, spackle and wire on canvas

Signed and dated 'MOHAN / SAMANT / 83 83' and bearing labels on reverse: 'Sufi Dancers / 50" x 74" / 1983', 'B / Title: Sufi Dancers / Date of completion: 1985 / Medium: Oil, paper, spackle / and wire on canvas / Size: 48 x 72 x 2.5 ins. / Artist: Mohan Samant / 26 East 22nd Street / New York, New York 10010-6107 / Telephone: (212) 254-9377 / Fax: (212) 254-3127', 'Sufi Dancers / 1985 48 x 72 in. / Oil, paper, spackle and wire on canvas / Catalog # 8505 / Mohan Samant' and 'Sufi Dancers 1985 / Oil, paper, spackle and wire on canvas / 48 x 72 in. Catalog # 8505 / Mohan Samant / 26 East 22nd Street, New York, NY 10010'

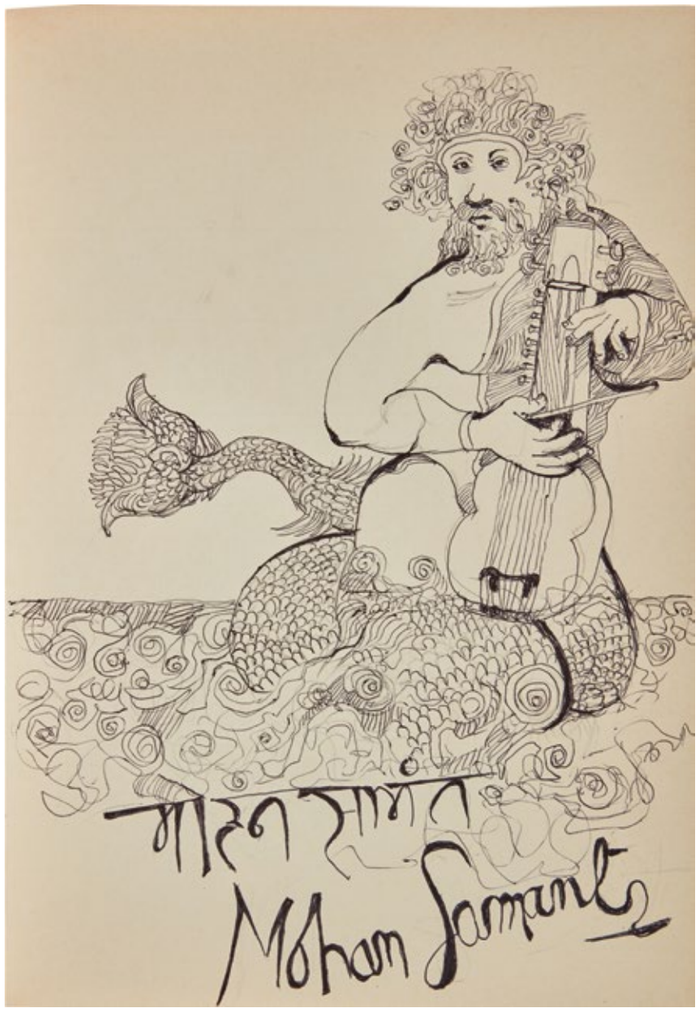
123.2 x 184 cm. (48 ½ x 72 ⅜ in.)

Executed between 1983-85

LITERATURE

R. Hoskote, M. Sirhandi, and J. Wechsler, *Mohan Samant: Paintings*, Mapin Publishing Pvt. Ltd., Ahmedabad, 2013, illustration p. 97, 228, 364 & 456

This artwork has generously been loaned to the exhibition



17

MOHAN SAMANT

1924-2004

Merman Playing Sarangi

Pen and pencil on paper

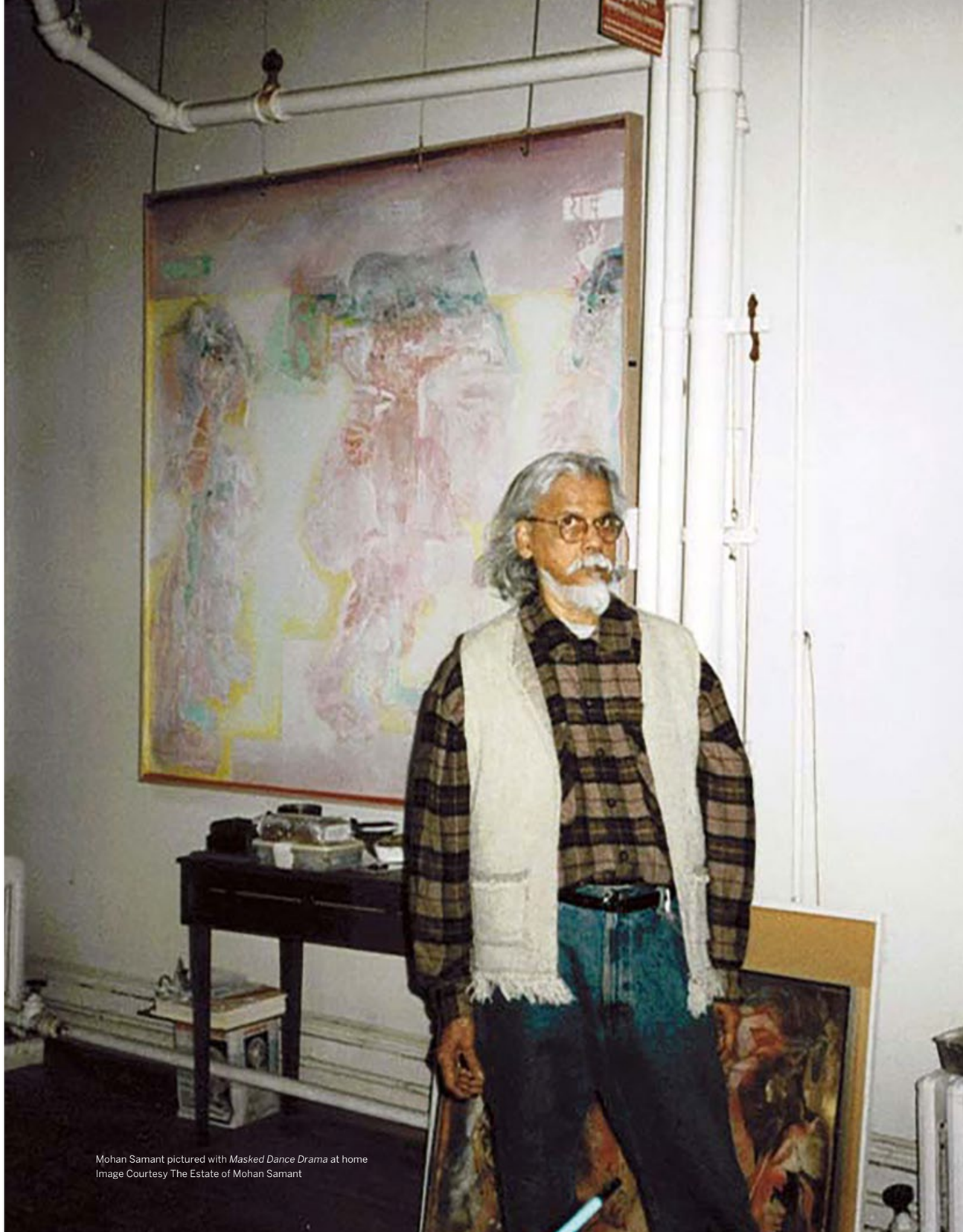
Signed in Devanagari and 'Mohan Samant' lower centre

29 x 21 cm. (11 ⅜ x 8 ¼ in.)

LITERATURE

R. Hoskote, M. Sirhandi, and J. Wechsler, *Mohan Samant: Paintings*, Mapin Publishing Pvt. Ltd., Ahmedabad, 2013, illustration p. 470

This artwork has generously been loaned to the exhibition



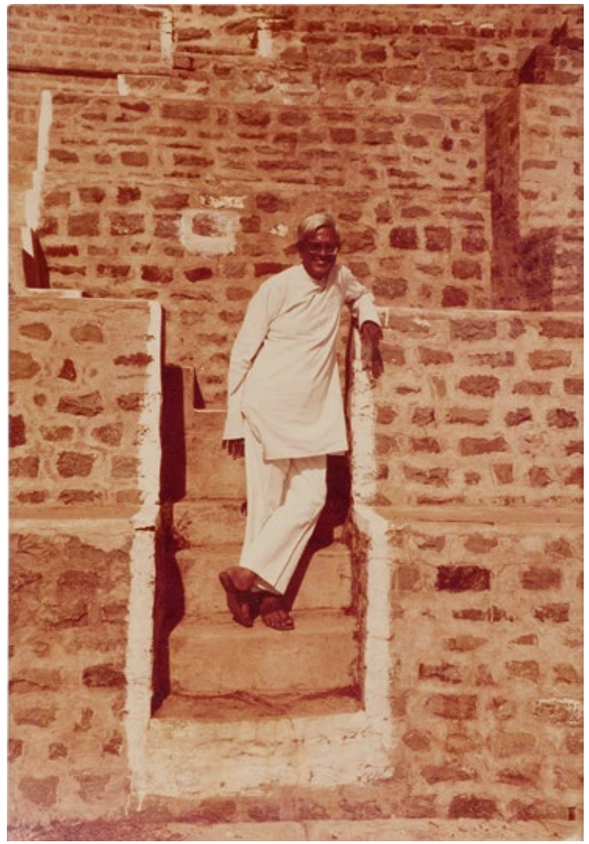
Mohan Samant pictured with *Masked Dance Drama* at home
Image Courtesy The Estate of Mohan Samant

BHUPEN KHAKHAR

1934–2003

"... the artist's life and work continues to represent exceptional freedom of thought and expression. Khakhar remains provocative and challenging, making imperative the need to exhibit, share and preserve his exceptional artistic legacy".

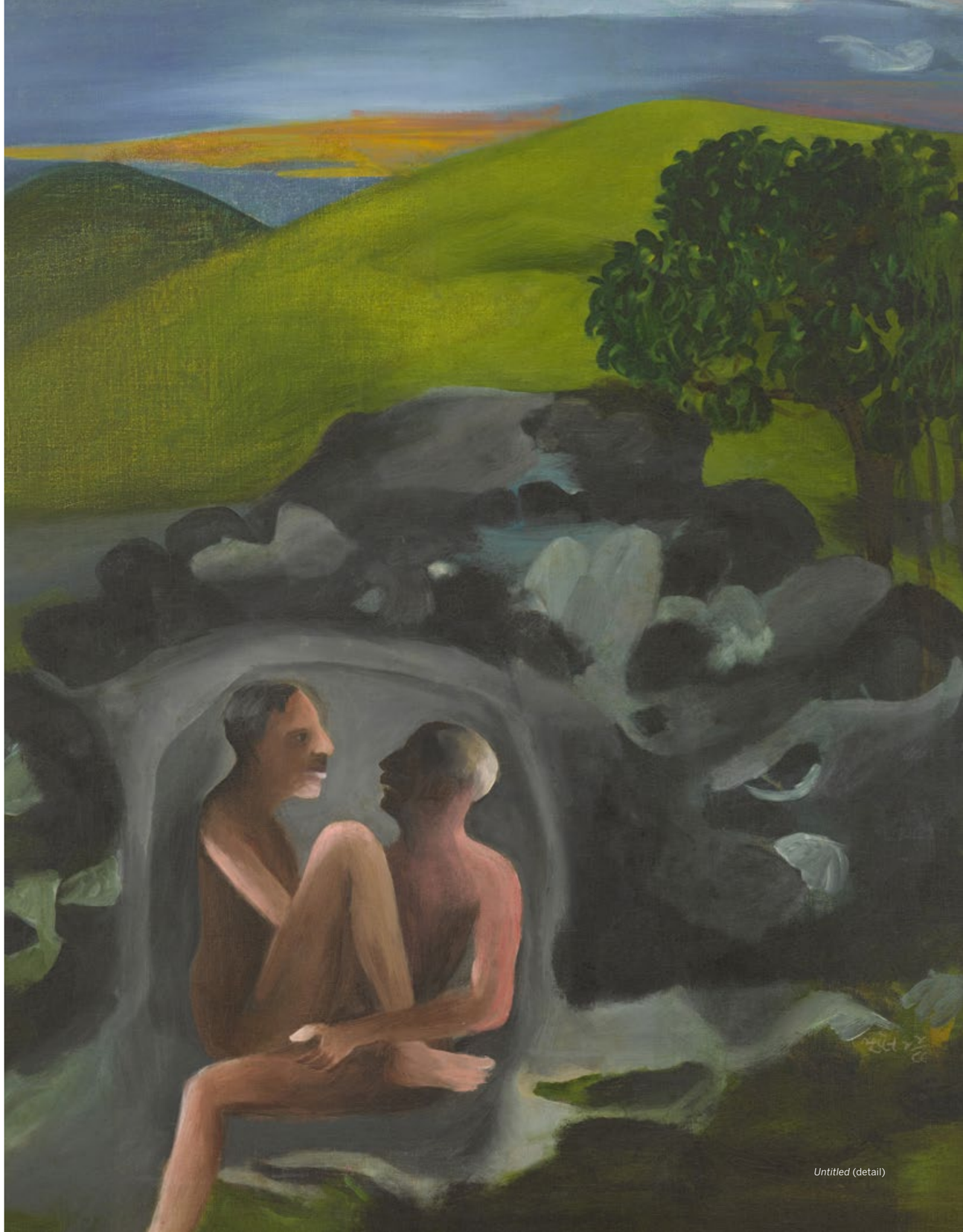
Nada Raza



Bhupen Khakhar
Image Courtesy Estate of Bhupen Khakhar

A true maverick, Bhupen Khakhar is celebrated for his unceasingly inventive and avowedly personal artistic practice. Traversing painting, prints, ceramics and sketchbooks, this group of works from the Estate of Bhupen Khakhar commemorates the artist's relationships, travels and continual experimentation with medium.

Anchoring the exhibition is an enigmatic landscape from 1988. The composition depicts two nude men in tender embrace, enclosed within a rocky enclave. Behind the figures, a verdant vista unfolds. Unlike most tableaus by Khakhar, populated by various miniaturised vignettes, the couple are the sole figures within the scene. The composition recalls the emotional tenor of Khakhar's celebrated *Seva* (1987) and develops on his artistic reflections on desire, vulnerability and the experience of living between disclosure and concealment.



Untitled (detail)

Embrace (detail)

While best known as a painter, Khakhar was also an accomplished printmaker. His engagement with the medium developed in part through his friendship with P. D. Dhumal, Head of Printmaking at the Faculty of Fine Arts, Baroda. From the late 1980s onwards, he embraced etching, lithography, screen and relief printing with characteristic wit and freedom, translating familiar subjects and characters into new forms. Alongside prints such as *Pataya*, *Birth of Water* and *Embrace*, is a complete set of woodcuts and linocuts created for Salman Rushdie's *Two Stories* (1989). These illustrations to *The Free Radio and The Prophet's Hair* are a testament to the long-standing friendship between two of South Asia's most celebrated artistic figures.

The exhibition also features sketchbooks from Khakhar's travels in Goa (1985) and Thailand (2001) and a selection of ceramics. Together, this collection of works reveals the breadth of Khakhar's creative vision. An artist of exceptional freedom and versatility, his influence remains as vital today as ever.

Watercolour and ink drawing from Thailand sketchbook

Born in Bombay in 1934, Bhupen Khakhar first trained as a chartered accountant before moving to Baroda in 1962, where he became associated with the influential Faculty of Fine Arts and later the Baroda Group. Widely considered India's first 'Pop' artist, Khakhar developed a distinct faux naïve style. Renowned for his narrative and autobiographical works, he famously declared his homosexuality through an iconic series of paintings in the 1980s. Today, his work is held in institutional collections including Tate, National Portrait Gallery and Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

18

BHUPEN KHAKHAR

1934 - 2003

Untitled

Oil on canvas

Signed and dated in Gujarati lower right

92 x 92 cm. (36 ¼ x 36 ¼ in.)

Painted in 1988

"His paintings and his lifestyle are cosmopolitan because they are suffused with 'togetherness', and are self-journeys through the real and the imaginary... Layered, dense, real and fantastical... [his pictures] are aesthetic declarations of what Khakhar wanted - everything at once and to live without limits. This is how he attempted to inhabit the world, and it is this risky endeavour that is so inspiring."

Shanay Jhaveri
(S. Jhaveri, 'Living Without Limits: Bhupen Khakhar's Cosmopolitanism', C. Dercon and N. Raza, *Bhupen Khakhar: You Can't Please All*, Tate Publishing, London, 2016, p. 37)

19

BHUPEN KHAKHAR

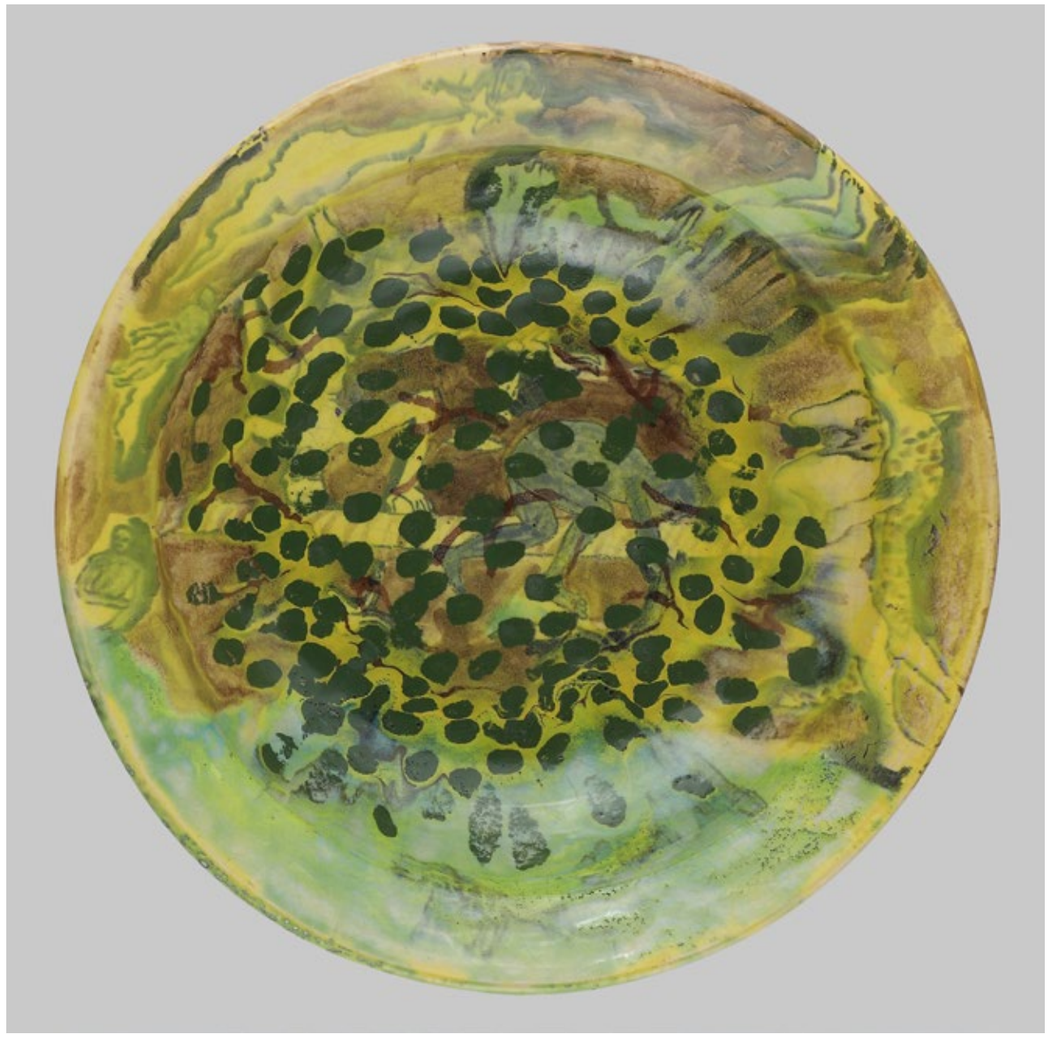
1934 - 2003

Untitled (Blue Dish)

White earthenware, painted in blue and black

2 cm. (¾ in.) high

23 cm. (9 ⅛ in.) diam.



20

BHUPEN KHAKHAR

1934 - 2003

Untitled (Green Dish)

White earthenware, the interior with green and brown glazes, the underside of the rim painted in monochrome

12 cm. (4 ⅝ in.) high

51 cm. (20 ⅛ in.) diam.

21

BHUPEN KHAKHAR

1934 - 2003

Untitled

Screenprint in colours

Signed in Gujarati lower right

Proof aside from the edition

Image: 38 x 27.5 cm. (15 x 10 ⅞ in.)

Sheet: 48.1 x 35 cm. (18 ⅞ x 13 ¾ in.)

Further proofs are available for sale.
Please contact the department for more information.

22

BHUPEN KHAKHAR

1934 - 2003

Bathing Ghat; Restaurant in Kerala

Two lithographs printed in colours

Signed and dated in Gujarati and titled and numbered '9/15 Bathing ghat' along lower edge; Signed and dated in Gujarati and titled and numbered '9/15 Restaurant in Kerala.' along lower edge

Edition 9 of 15

Image: 38 x 53 cm. (15 x 20 ⅞ in.) (each approx.)

Sheet: 56 x 76 cm. (22 x 29 ⅞ in.) (each approx.)

(2)

Executed in 1993

Further editions are available for sale.
Please contact the department for more information.

23

BHUPEN KHAKHAR

1934 - 2003

Untitled (Illustrations for Salman Rushdie's Two Stories)

Eight relief prints on tissue-thin cream paper

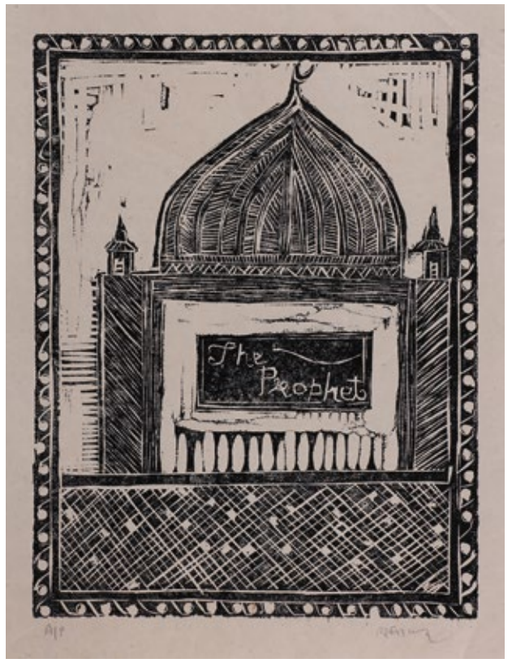
Signed in Gujarati and numbered 'A/P' along lower edge (5); Signed in Gujarati and titled and numbered 'A/P School Master' along lower edge (1)

Artist's Proofs aside from the edition

Image: 23 x 18 cm. (9 x 7 ⅛ in.) (each approx.)

Sheet: 29.5 x 22.5 cm. (11 ⅝ x 8 ⅞ in.) (7, each approx.); 45.5 x 29.5 cm. (17 ⅞ x 11 ⅝ in.) (1)

(8)



24

BHUPEN KHAKHAR

1934 - 2003

Goa Drawings (Artist's Sketchbook)

Mixed media on paper

Titled 'Goa Drawings' and inscribed in Gujarati on cover

Dated and inscribed 'Krishna Kumar in bed on / first day to Goa. / 5.5.85' on reverse (1)

24.5 x 31 cm. (9 ⅝ x 12 ¼ in.)

19 pages

Executed in 1985

25

BHUPEN KHAKHAR

1934 - 2003

Thailand (Artist's Sketchbook)

Mixed media on paper

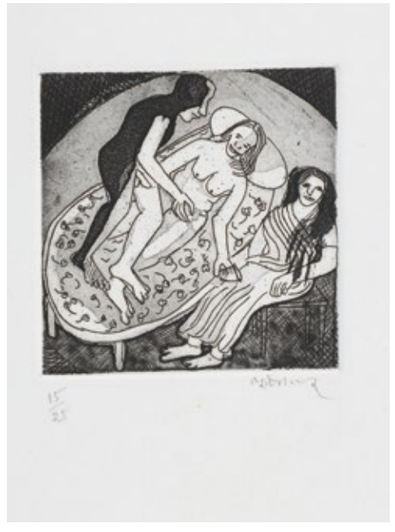
Dated, titled and inscribed 'Thailand / 11.10.2001 / Bosch's Drawings' on cover

Variously signed and dated in Gujarati, and inscribed in Gujarati and English: 'Sunbeam Hotel'; 'Coral Island'; 'Pataya - beach'

24.4 x 27.5 cm. (9 ½ x 10 ¾ in.)

15 pages

Executed in 2001



Further editions are available for sale.
Please contact the department for more information.

26

BHUPEN KHAKHAR

1934 - 2003

Set of 8 Etchings

Cards, Untitled (Printing Press); Untitled; Untitled; Untitled; Untitled; Pataya; Birth of Water

Seven etchings with aquatint: One etching with aquatint and hand additions on cream paper

Signed in Gujarati and titled, dated and numbered '9/23 Cards 2003'; Signed in Gujarati and numbered '11/23'; Signed in Gujarati and numbered '15/24'; Signed in Gujarati and numbered '11/25; Signed in Gujarati and numbered '15/25'; Signed in Gujarati and numbered '10/20'; Signed in Gujarati and titled, dated and numbered '19/23 Pataya 2003'

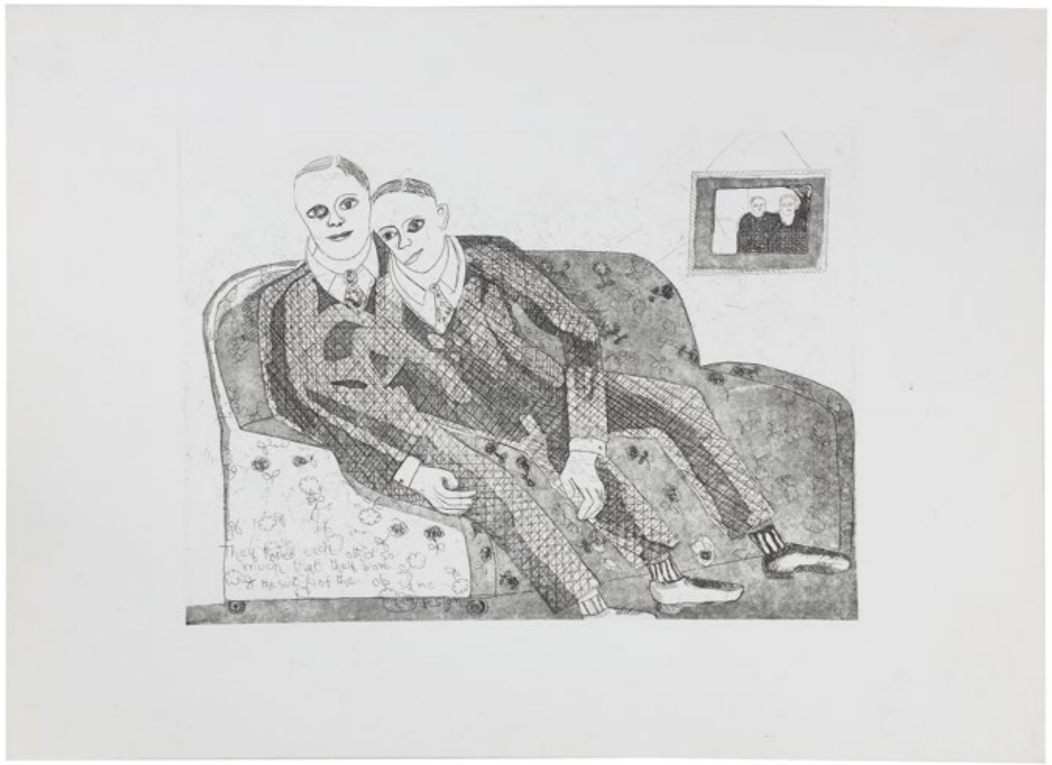
Edition 9 of 23; Edition 11 of 23; Edition 15 of 24; Edition 11 of 25; Edition 15 of 25; Edition 10 of 20; Edition 19 of 23; Artist's Proof aside from the edition

Image: 16 x 16 cm. (6 ¼ x 6 ¼ in.); 21 x 17 cm. (8 ¼ x 6 ¾ in.); 20 x 15 cm. (7 ⅞ x 5 ⅞ in.); 10 x 10 cm. (4 x 4 in.); 10 x 10 cm. (4 x 4 in.); 12 x 7.5 cm. (4 ¾ x 3 in.); 25 x 48.5 cm. (9 ⅞ x 19 ⅛ in.); 40 x 49 cm. (15 ¾ x 19 ⅜ in.)

Sheet: 25 x 25 cm. (9 ⅞ x 9 ⅞ in.); 38 x 28 cm. (15 x 11 in.); 38 x 28 cm. (15 x 11 in.); 25 x 19 cm. (9 ⅞ x 7 ½ in.); 25 x 19 cm. (9 ⅞ x 7 ½ in.); 25 x 19 cm. (9 ⅞ x 7 ½ in.); 38 x 60 cm. (15 x 23 ⅝ in.); 56 x 76 cm. (22 x 29 ⅞ in.)

(8)

Executed in 2003 (Cards; Pataya)



27

BHUPEN KHAKHAR

1934 - 2003

Untitled (They loved each other so much that they wore the suit of the same design)

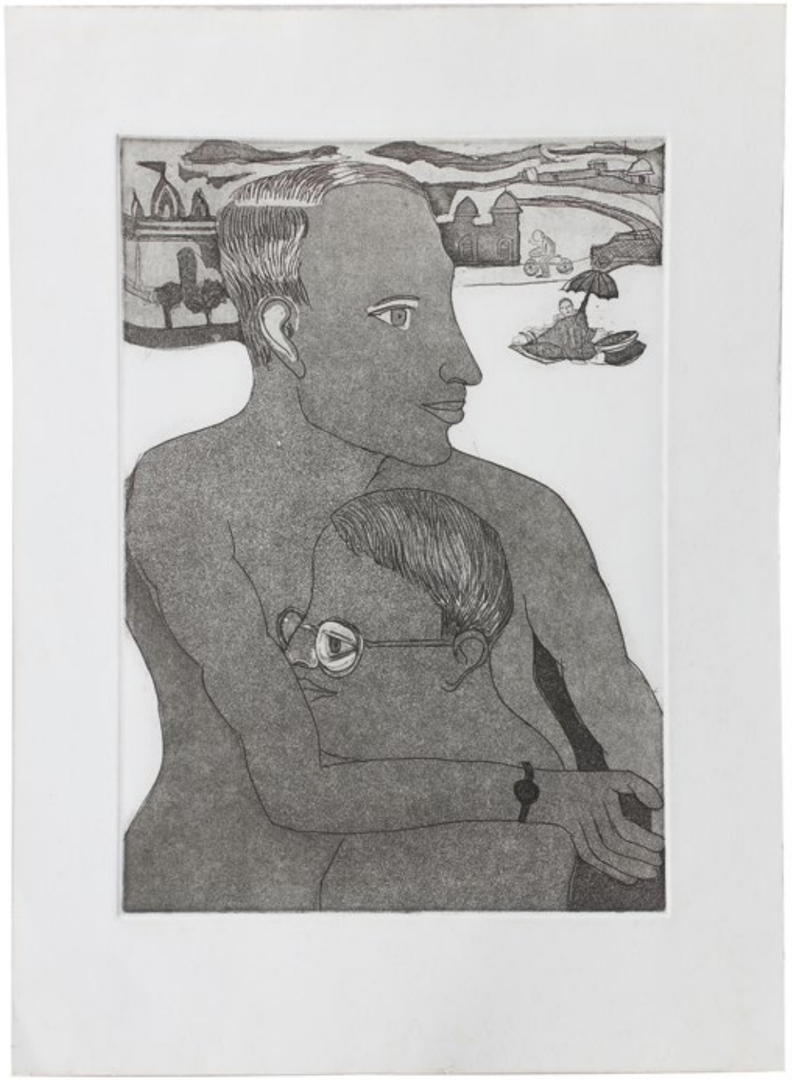
Etching with aquatint

Proof aside from the edition

Image: 24 x 33 cm. (9 ½ x 13 in.)

Sheet: 37 x 51 cm. (14 ⅝ x 20 ⅛ in.)

Further proofs are available for sale.
Please contact the department for more information.



28

BHUPEN KHAKHAR

1934 - 2003

Embrace

Etching with aquatint

Proof aside from the edition

Image: 28 x 19.5 cm. (11 x 7 ⅝ in.)

Sheet: 38 x 28 cm. (15 x 11 in.)

Further proofs available for sale.
Please contact the department for more information.

ZARINA

1937–2020

One of the most internationally and institutionally recognised artists from South Asia, Zarina is lauded for her astute handling of medium. Sourced from a range of private collections, this presentation focuses on Zarina's later body of work and reveals the artist's enduring engagement with materiality, memory and spirituality. Anchored by her monumental black marble *Tasbih* (2012), alongside mixed media works in gold leaf, crushed tissue, sumi ink and obsidian, this exhibition showcases the refined visual language that defined the artist's later years.

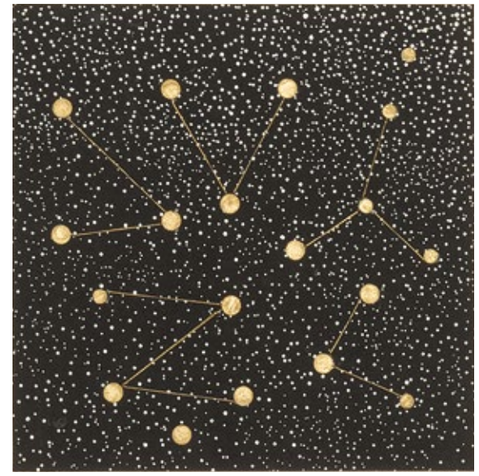
The artist's preoccupation with stars, constellations and the night sky is poetically expressed through works such as *Companions of the End of the Night* (2013), *Tied to the Sky* (2017) and *Thirty birds flying on the dark sky* (2017). Throughout the exhibition, the artist expounds on themes of darkness and light, contrasting black grounds with luminous gold leaf. Zarina believed gold was imbued with an auspicious quality and she began incorporating gold leaf in her works in the 2000s to explore the concept of *noor* (divine light).

"I have always been attracted to a spiritual life; it makes me humble knowing that there is a greater power guiding me. My recent work dealing with darkness and light is a manifestation of this interest. *Nōor* (divine light) is an age-old concept prevalent in many religious traditions... Sufi mystics believe that your soul is part of *noor*; and when you come to this earth, it is separated from the divine. All your life the light has abandoned you, and you long to be reunited with your creator."

Zarina

Zarina's later years also saw the emergence of her iconic *tasbih* sculptures. Executed in varied materials, including sandalwood, green onyx and maplewood coated in gold leaf, these installations transform a familiar devotional object into a monumental meditation on touch, repetition and prayer. The centrepiece of the exhibition is *Tasbih* (2012). Crafted from exquisite black marble, this installation is among the most significant sculptural works of Zarina's later career.

Born in 1937 in Aligarh, Zarina left India in 1958 and lived a peripatetic life across Bangkok, Paris, Bonn, Tokyo and New Delhi, before settling in New York in 1976. It was during these sojourns that Zarina learned the craft of relief and intaglio printmaking. Over the course of her career, she mastered a remarkable range of materials and techniques, working across paper, wood, metal and terracotta. Zarina's works explore themes of home and belonging and are held in numerous museum collections, including the Whitney Museum of American Art and Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris; and Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



From top to bottom:
Tied to the Sky (detail)
Restless Sky
Thirty birds flying on the dark sky

29

ZARINA

1937 - 2020

Tasbih

Black marble strung with metal wire and silk cord

Total length: 420 cm. (165 ¼ in.) (approx.)

99 beads

Each bead: 7.5 cm. (3 in.) diam. (approx.)

This work is unique

Executed in 2012

PROVENANCE

Acquired from the artist

30

ZARINA

1937 - 2020

Tied to the Sky

Woodcut printed on BFK light paper collaged with gold leaf and thread, mounted on Arches Cover Buff paper

Signed 'Zarina 2014' lower right (each). One titled 'Tied to the sky' lower left

These works are unique

Image: 20 x 20 cm. (7 ⅞ x 7 ⅞ in.) (each approx.)

Sheet: 38 x 38 cm. (14 ⅞ x 14 ⅞ in.) (each approx.)

(4)

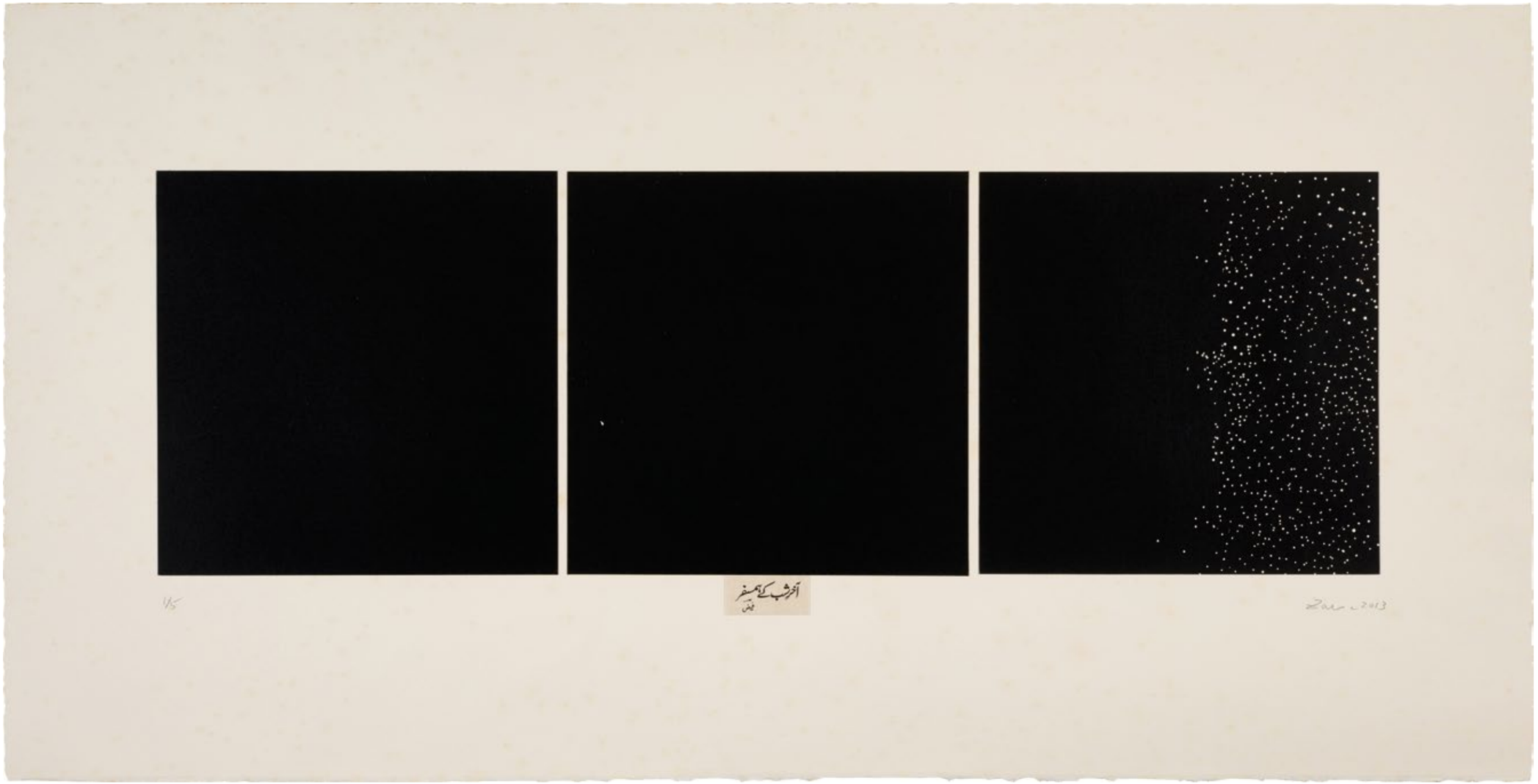
Executed in 2014

PROVENANCE

Acquired from the artist

"Memory is the only lasting possession we have. I have made my life the subject of my work, using the images of home, the places I have visited, and the stars I have looked up to."

Zarina



31

ZARINA

1937 - 2020

Companions of the End of the Night

Woodcuts mounted on Somerset Antique paper

Signed, dated and numbered '1/5 Zarina 2013' and titled in Urdu along lower edge

Edition 1 of 5

Image: 20 x 20 cm. (7 ⅞ x 7 ⅞ in.) (each approx.)

Sheet: 38.5 x 76 cm. (15 ⅛ x 29 ⅞ in.)

Executed in 2013

PROVENANCE

Acquired from the artist

32

ZARINA

1937 - 2020

Untitled

Collage with 22-karat gold leaf and BFK light paper printed with black ink mounted on Arches Cover buff paper

Signed and dated 'Zarina 2016' lower right

This work is unique

44.4 x 22.5 cm. (17 ⅜ x 8 ⅞ in.)

Executed in 2016

PROVENANCE

Acquired from the artist

33

ZARINA

1937 - 2020

Untitled

Gold leaf on card

Signed, dated and numbered '2/2 / Zarina 2013' on reverse

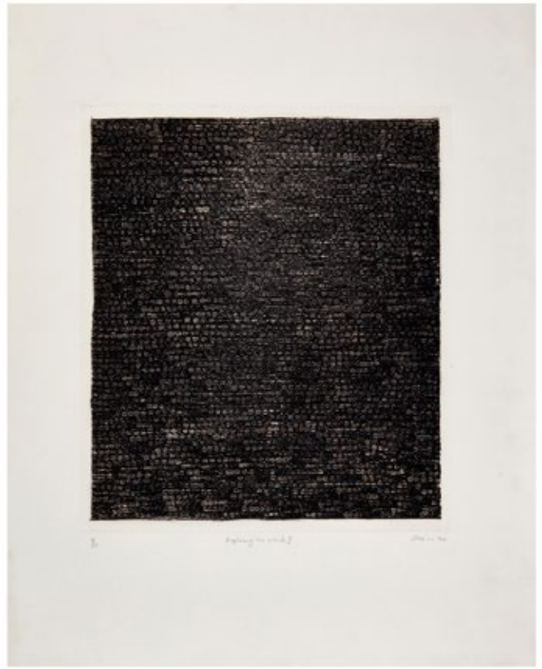
Edition 2 of 2

15.2 x 10.1 cm. (6 x 4 in.)

Executed in 2013

PROVENANCE

Acquired from the artist



34

ZARINA

1937 - 2020

Exploring the Wreck I; Exploring the Wreck II

Etching on Arches white paper

Signed, dated, titled and numbered '11/25 Exploring the wreck I Zarina 92' along lower edge; Signed, dated, titled and numbered '11/25 Exploring the wreck II Zarina 92' along lower edge

Edition 11 of 25

Image: 43.7 x 38.4 cm. (17 ¼ x 15 ⅛ in.) (each approx.)

Sheet: 70.8 x 56 cm. (27 ⅞ x 22 in.) (each approx.)

(2)

Executed in 1992

PROVENANCE

Acquired from the artist

35

ZARINA

1937 - 2020

Untitled

Crushed tissue paper stained with Sumi ink mounted on Arches Cover buff paper

Signed and dated 'Zarina 2016' lower right

This work is unique

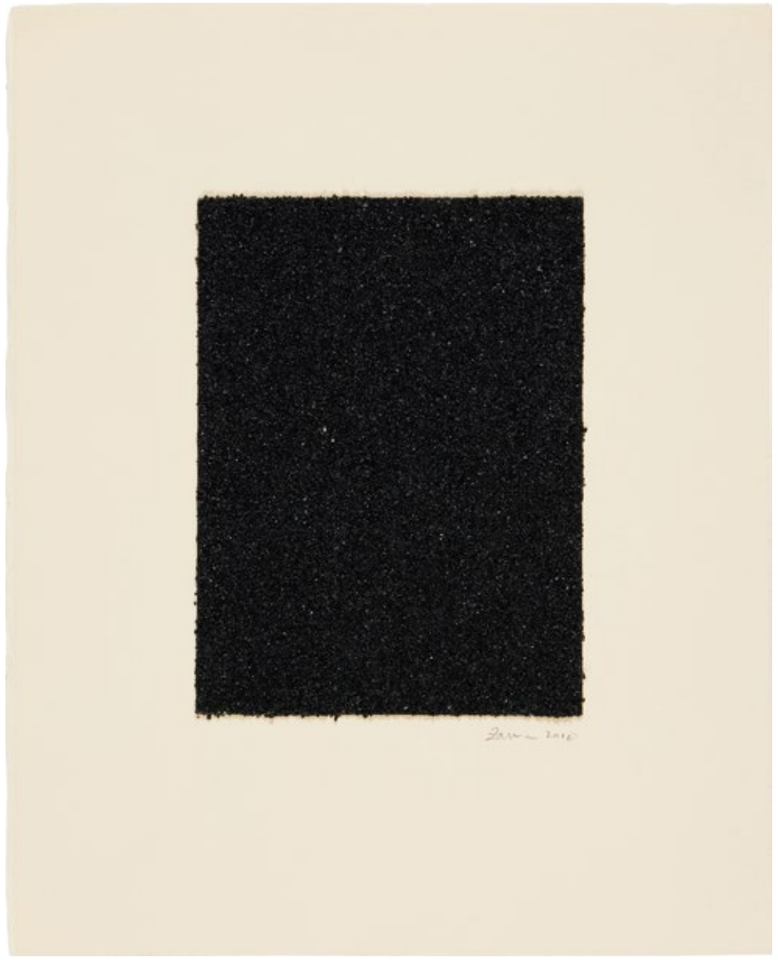
Image: 25.2 x 19.4 cm. (9 ⅞ x 7 ⅝ in.)

Sheet: 40 x 30.1 cm. (15 ¾ x 11 ⅞ in.)

Executed in 2016

PROVENANCE

Acquired from the artist



36

ZARINA

1937 - 2020

Untitled

Laminated BFK paper stained with Sumi ink, coated in archival PVA glue, sprinkled with black Obsidian mounted on laminated BFK paper and on Arches Cover buff paper

Signed and dated 'Zarina 2010' lower right

This work is unique

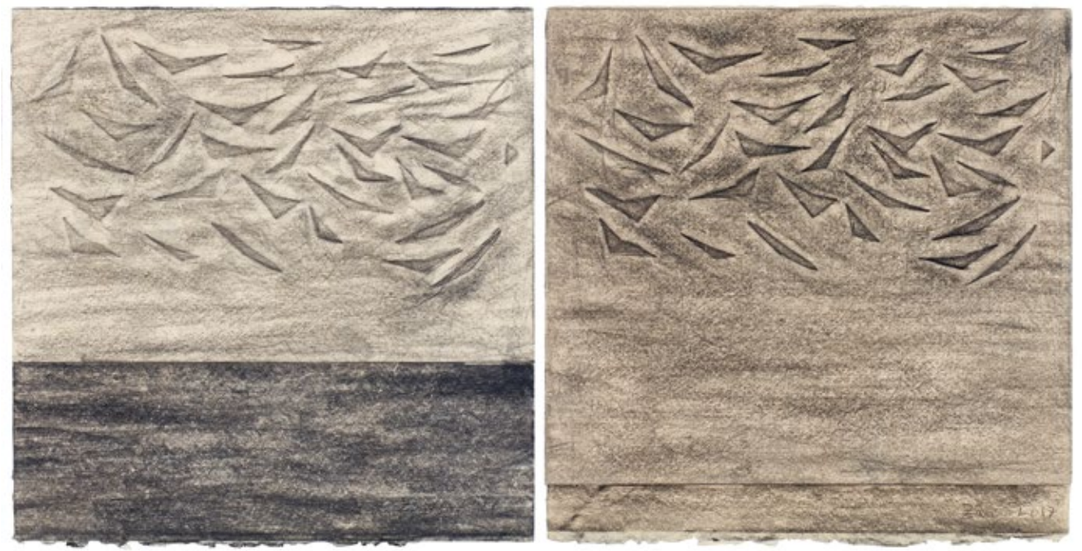
Image: 23.3 x 15.2 cm. (8 x 6 in.)

Sheet: 37.5 x 30.2 cm. (14 ¾ x 11 ⅞ in.)

Executed in 2010

PROVENANCE

Acquired from the artist



37

ZARINA

1937 - 2020

Untitled (Set of 2)

Collage with graphite rubbings on Arches Cover buff paper

Signed and dated 'Zarina 2017' lower right (each)

These works are unique

26 x 25 cm. (10 ¼ x 10 in.) (each approx.)

(2)

Executed in 2017

PROVENANCE

Acquired from the artist

38

ZARINA

1937 - 2020

Untitled

Gold leaf on Arches Black paper mounted on Arches Cover buff paper

Signed and dated 'Zarina 2017' lower right

This work is unique

Image: 10.1 x 10.1 cm. (4 x 4 in.) (variable)

Sheet: 22.9 cm x 15.3 cm. (9 x 6 in.)

Executed in 2017

PROVENANCE

Acquired from the artist

39

ZARINA

1937 - 2020

Untitled (Set of 2)

22-karat gold leaf on Arches Black paper mounted on Arches Cover buff paper; Rubbing on Arches Black paper mounted on Arches Cover buff paper

Signed and dated 'Zarina 2017' lower right (each)

These works are unique

Image: 10 x 10 cm. (4 x 4 in.) (each approx.)

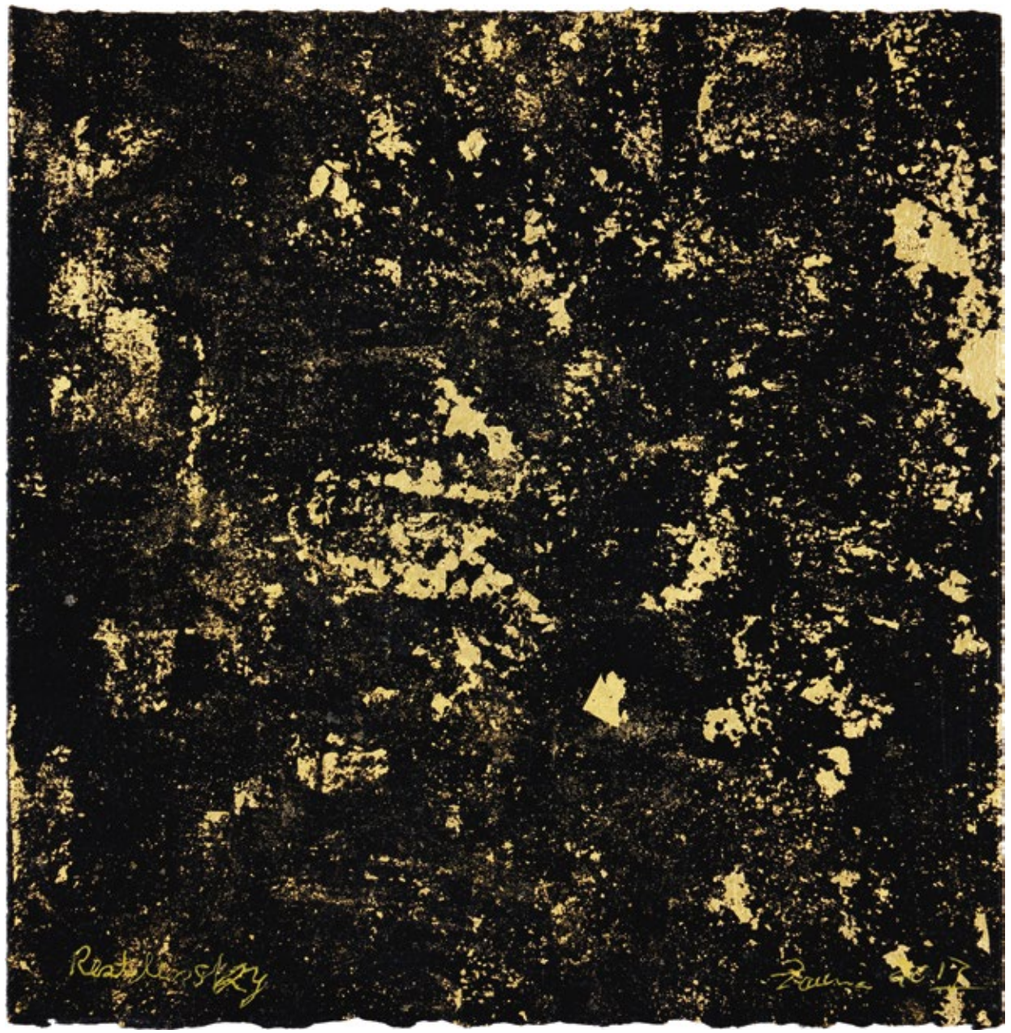
Sheet: 22.9 x 15.5 cm. (9 x 6 ⅛ in.) (each approx.)

(2)

Executed in 2017

PROVENANCE

Acquired from the artist



40

ZARINA

1937 - 2020

Restless Sky

22-karat gold leaf on Arches Black paper

Signed, dated and titled 'Restless sky Zarina 2017' along lower edge

This work is unique

23 x 22.5 cm. (9 x 8 ⅞ in.)

Executed in 2017

PROVENANCE

Acquired from the artist

41

ZARINA

1937 - 2020

Thirty Birds Flying on the Dark Sky

Collage with gold stick rubbings on Arches Black paper

Signed, dated and titled 'Thirty Birds Flying on the dark sky Zarina 2017' along lower edge

This work is unique

25.7 x 25.5 cm. (10 ⅛ x 10 in.)

Executed in 2017

PROVENANCE

Acquired from the artist

42

ZARINA

1937 - 2020

Untitled (Set of 2)

Collage with 22-karat gold leaf mounted on Arches Black paper, mounted on Arches Cover buff paper; Collage with 22-karat gold leaf mounted on Arches Cover buff paper

Signed and dated 'Zarina 2017' lower right (each)

These works are unique

Image: 10 x 10 cm. (4 x 4 in.) (each approx.)

Sheet: 23 x 15.5 cm. (9 x 6 ⅛ in.) (each approx.)

(2)

Executed in 2017

PROVENANCE

Acquired from the artist

43

ZARINA

1937 - 2020

Untitled (Set of 2)

Collage with handmade Nepalese paper and gold leaf mounted on Arches Cover buff paper; Rubbing on Indian handmade paper mounted on Arches Cover buff paper

Signed and dated 'Zarina 2010' lower right; Signed and dated 'Zarina 2017' lower right

These works are unique

Image: 8.9 x 11.2 cm. (3 ½ x 4 ⅜ in.); 10 x 10 cm. (4 x 4 in.)

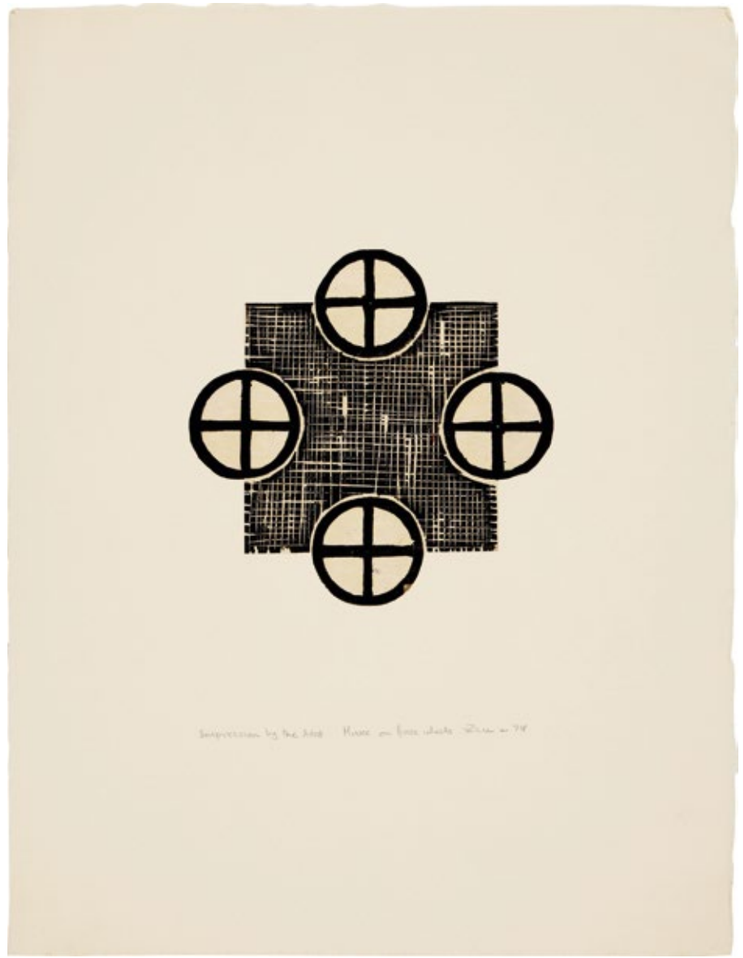
Sheet: 23 x 16.8 cm. (9 x 6 ½ in.); 22.9 x 15.9 cm. (9 x 6 ¼ in.)

(2)

Executed in 2010; 2017

PROVENANCE

Acquired from the artist



44

ZARINA

1937 - 2020

House on four wheels

Woodcut on Nepalese handmade paper mounted on wove paper

Signed, dated, titled and inscribed 'Impression by the Artist House on four wheels Zarina 94' along lower edge and further dated and inscribed 'From the portfolio *Packed House* 1994' on reverse

Impression from the portfolio *Packed House*

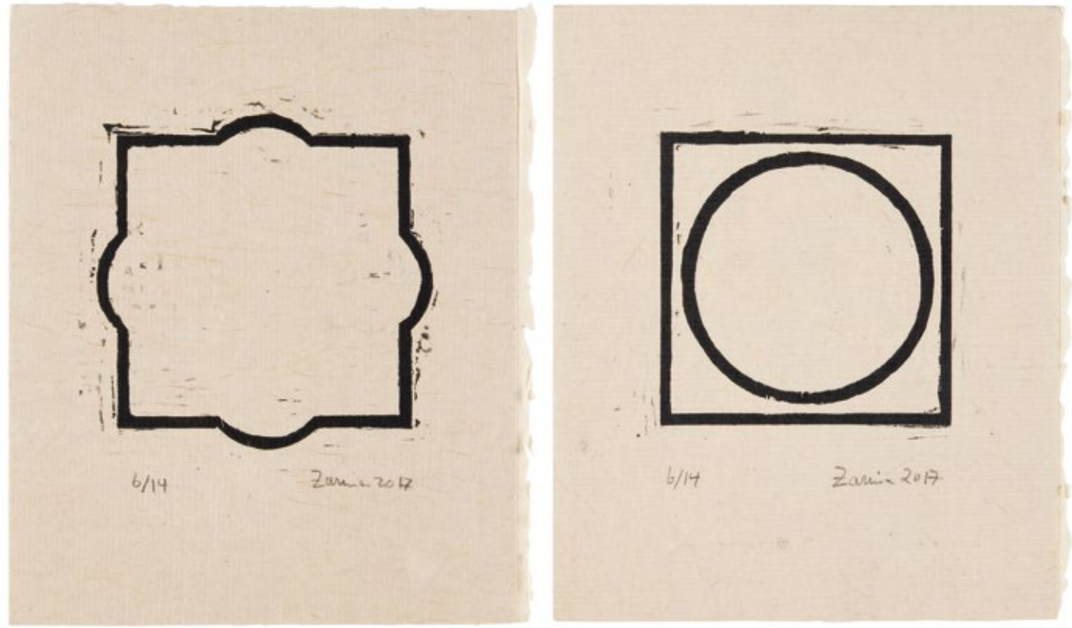
Image: 16.2 x 16.5 cm. (6 ⅜ x 6 ½ in.) (variable)

Sheet: 43.3 x 32.9 cm. (17 x 12 ⅞ in.)

Executed in 1994

PROVENANCE

Acquired from the artist



45

ZARINA

1937 - 2020

Untitled (Set of 2)

Woodcut on Indian handmade paper mounted on Arches Cover buff paper

Signed, dated and numbered '6/14 Zarina 2017' along lower edge (each)

Edition 6 of 14

Image: 10.9 x 11 cm. (4 ¼ x 4 ¼ in.) (variable);
9.7 x 9.5 cm. (3 ¾ x 3 ¾ in.)

Sheet: 20 x 16.5 cm. (7 ⅞ x 6 ½ in.) (each approx.)

(2)

Executed in 2017

PROVENANCE

Acquired from the artist

ZAHOOR UL AKHLAQ

1941–1999

"The basic components of a painting are colour, line, dimension, balance, and synthesis. They, put together, create a feeling, an effect. There are no words to describe this feeling or effect... The word is finite; the image, infinite...

I am not entirely responsible for what I have put on view. I share this responsibility with all the poets, musicians, sculptors, writers, artists... who have, over the years, influenced me."

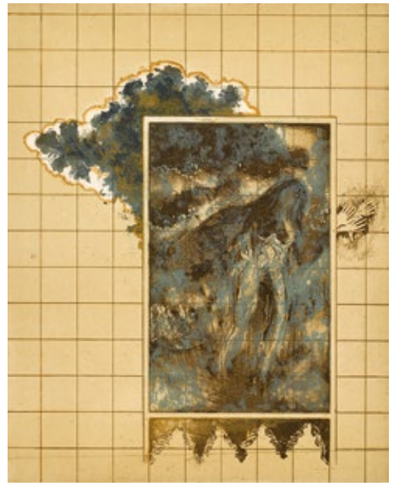
Zahoor ul Akhlaq

Zahoor ul Akhlaq is celebrated for his complex, multi-layered visual language, and yet the artist's own elucidations on his practice are marked by a refreshing candour and humility. From the outset of his career, Akhlaq was forthright in his artist statements: 'The paintings on view are no more, no less than paintings. They don't have to be "understood".' (*Exhibition of Paintings by Zahoor ul Akhlaq*, exhibition catalogue, The Arts Council of Pakistan, Karachi, September 1966). This liberated artistic approach allowed Akhlaq to explore uninhibited avenues of expression, across painting, printmaking and sculpture. Sotheby's is honoured to present a selection of Akhlaq's works from across the full breadth of his career. Ranging from rare early works through to large-scale canvases of the 1990s, this collection of artworks from the estate of the artist represents an in-depth survey of Akhlaq's visionary practice.

Zahoor ul Akhlaq and Sheherezade Alam in 1991
Image courtesy and copyright The Estate of Zahoor ul Akhlaq

Employing the grid as a framing device, Akhlaq's works weave the influences of Islamic calligraphy, architecture and miniature painting, together with the principles of Cubism and Colour Field painting. 'Akhlaq plays within the structure of a square in order to accommodate both post-modern visions of spatial surface and the strict geometry that gave exquisite elegance to the Mughal tradition of Islamic art.' (Sara Suleri, *Recent Paintings of Zahoor ul Akhlaq*, exhibition catalogue, Chawkandi Art, Karachi, 1991, unpaginated) The structure of *Radio Photo of Objects Unidentified* (1983) mimics the page of a Mughal manuscript, while in *Untitled* (1991), a female silhouette faces an ambiguous, architectural frame, emblematic of a window to Akhlaq's abstract worlds.

In 2016, acclaimed contemporary artist Rashid Rana selected Akhlaq as one of ArtReview's 'Future Greats'. An acknowledgment for under-recognised artists, this nomination by one of Akhlaq's former students at Lahore's National College of Arts is a testament to the respect and admiration he inspired in his peers. Akhlaq began teaching at the NCA in 1963, the year after his graduation. He was instrumental in creating the Miniature Painting Department at the school, revolutionising this centuries-old tradition into a contemporary art form. Akhlaq's personal practice and academic mentorship are credited as defining influences for some of Pakistan's best known contemporary artists. Rana notes, 'In retrospect, I believe that Akhlaq's work set a precedent that provided frameworks to many contemporary artists, for shaping questions of identity and its relationship to physical and chronological location.' (R. Rana, 'Future Greats: Zahoor ul Akhlaq', *ArtReview*, 13 April 2016, https://artreview.com/2016-future-great-zahoor-ul-akhlaq/)



Top: *Radio Photo of Objects Unidentified (detail)*
Bottom: *Untitled*

Born in Delhi in 1941, Zahoor ul Akhlaq was raised in Karachi after Partition. In 1958, he joined the National College of Arts, Lahore and studied under Pakistani painter Shakir Ali. Between 1966 and 1969, he undertook post graduate studies in printmaking at the Hornsey College of Art and Royal College of Art in London. In 1971, Akhlaq married Pakistani potter and fellow NCA alumnus Sheherezade Alam. Akhlaq was a teacher at his alma mater for nearly three decades, becoming Head of the Fine Arts Department in 1979. He taught many of Pakistan's most celebrated contemporary artists, including Rashid Rana, Shahzia Sikander and Imran Qureshi. Akhlaq melded modern abstraction with traditional art practices of South Asia, and is renowned for his pioneering role in developing contemporary miniature painting in Pakistan. His work forms part of significant museum collections, including Tate, London; Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; and Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto.

46

ZAHOOR UL AKHLAQ

1941 - 1999

A Visit to the Inner Sanctum IV

Acrylic on canvas

211 x 142.1 cm. (83 1/8 x 55 3/4 in.)

Painted *circa* 1996

EXHIBITED

Venice, Venice Biennale, *Modernities and Memories: Recent Works from the Islamic World,* June - November 1997
Lahore, National College of Arts Gallery, *Zahoor ul Akhlaq: A Retrospective 1961-1998,* April - May 1998
Mississauga, Art Gallery of Mississauga, *The Passion of Zahoor ul Akhlaq,* September - October 2003
New York, *Asia Society, Hanging Fire: Contemporary Art from Pakistan,* September 2009 - January 2010

LITERATURE

Zahoor ul Akhlaq: A Retrospective 1961-1998, exhibition catalogue, National College of Arts Gallery, Lahore, 1998, illustration cover
R. Connah, *Zahoor ul Akhlaq,* LAAL, Toronto, 2000, illustration p. 28

47

ZAHOOR UL AKHLAQ

1941 - 1999

Untitled (Butoh Series)

Acrylic on board

91.5 x 60.7 cm. (36 x 23 7/8 in.)

Painted *circa* 1995

48

ZAHOOR UL AKHLAQ

1941 - 1999

Untitled

Acrylic and mixed media on canvas

Signed 'Zahoor ul Akhlaq' and indistinctly dated on reverse

138 x 90.1 cm. (54 1/4 x 35 3/8 in.)

Executed *circa* 1991

EXHIBITED

Mississauga, Art Gallery of Mississauga, *The Passion of Zahoor ul Akhlaq*, September - October 2003

LITERATURE

R. Connah, *Zahoor ul Akhlaq*, LAAL, Toronto, 2000, illustration p.30

49

ZAHOOR UL AKHLAQ

1941 - 1999

Untitled

Acrylic on canvas

152.9 x 105.1 cm. (59 7/8 x 41 3/8 in.)

Painted *circa* 1975

EXHIBITED

Milton Keynes, MK Gallery, *Beyond the Page: South Asian Miniature Painting and Britain, 1600 to Now,* 7 October 2023 - 28 January 2024

LITERATURE

F. Blanchard & A. Spira (eds.), *Beyond the Page: South Asian Miniature Painting and Britain, 1600 to Now,* Bloomsbury Publishing, 2023, illustration p. 128

50

ZAHOOR UL AKHLAQ

1941 - 1999

Untitled

Acrylic on canvas

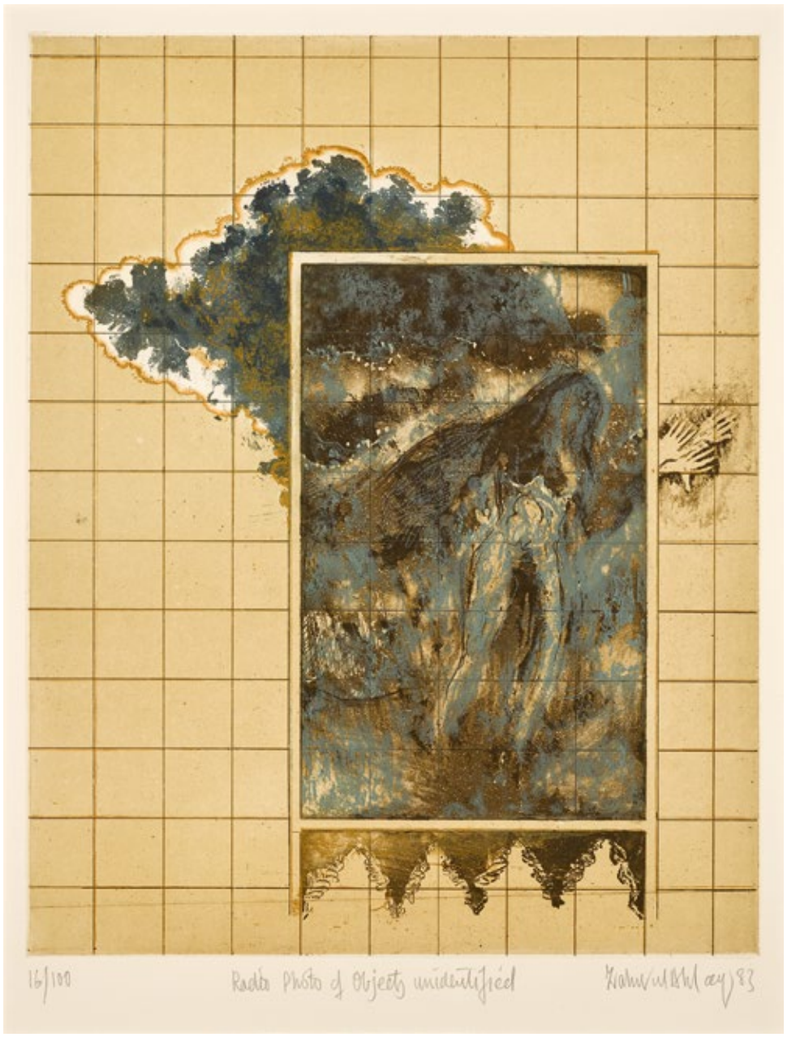
Signed and dated 'Zahoor ul Akhlaq / 91' on reverse

195.5 x 131 cm. (76 ⅞ x 51 ½ in.)

Painted in 1991

EXHIBITED

Lahore, National College of Arts Gallery, *Zahoor ul Akhlaq: A Retrospective 1961-1998,* April - May 1998



51

ZAHOOR UL AKHLAQ

1941 - 1999

Radio Photo of Objects Unidentified

Etching printed in colours

Signed, dated, titled and numbered '16/100 Radio Photo of Objects unidentified Zahoor ul Akhlaq 83' along lower edge

Edition 16 of 100

Image: 50.4 x 39.6 cm. (19 ⅞ x 15 ⅝ in.)

Sheet: 75.7 x 56.6 cm. (29 ¾ x 22 ¼ in.)

Executed in 1983

52

ZAHOOR UL AKHLAQ

1941 - 1999

Composition 211

Oil on canvas

Signed, dated, titled and indistinctly inscribed 'Composition 211 / Oil / 1965 / Zahoor ul Akhlaq / Rs [...]' on reverse

76 x 113 cm. (29 ⅞ x 44 ½ in.)

Painted in 1965

EXHIBITED
Karachi, The Arts Council of Pakistan, *Exhibition of Paintings by Zahoor ul Akhlaq,* September 1966
Lahore, National College of Arts Gallery, *Zahoor ul Akhlaq: A Retrospective 1961-1998,* April - May 1998

LITERATURE
Exhibition of Paintings by Zahoor ul Akhlaq, exhibition catalogue, The Arts Council of Pakistan, Karachi, 1966, unpaginated [enlisted]

53

ZAHOOR UL AKHLAQ

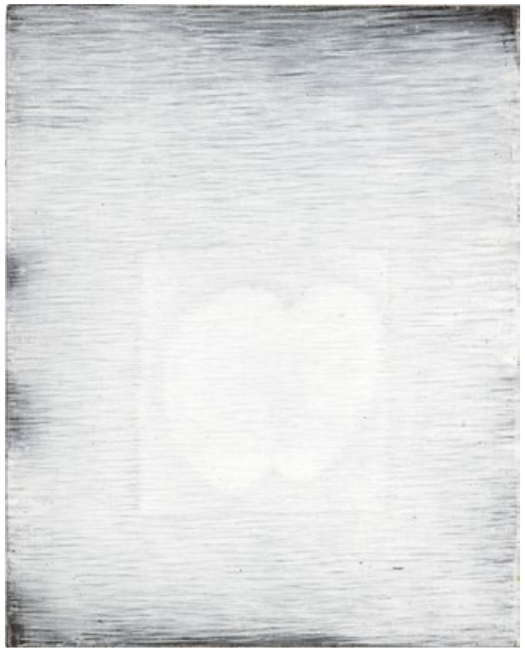
1941 - 1999

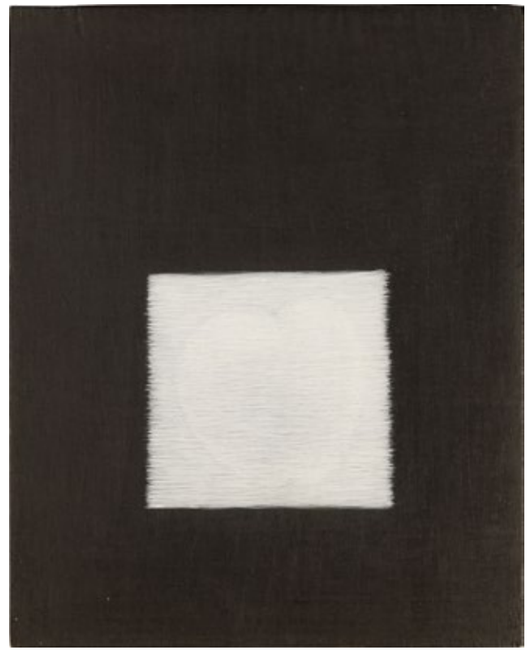
Untitled

Ink and qalum on paper

25 x 56 cm. (9 7/8 x 22 in.)

Executed *circa* 1967





54

ZAHOOR UL AKHLAQ

1941 - 1999

Still Still Life

Acrylic on board

Signed and dated in Urdu and titled and inscribed ‘Still Still Life / Acrylic’ on reverse (each)

22.5 x 20.4 cm. (8 7/8 x 8 in.) (each approx.)

(2)

Painted in 1995

“My mission is to tell everyone we are earth, fire, water, air.
I didn’t choose clay, clay chose me.”

Sheherezade Alam

Refer to complete cataloguing at SOTHEBYS.com

SHEHEREZADE ALAM

1948–2022

"There is the language of dance with a pot. And a constant sense of return, stages of handling, nurturing... If I had not experienced clay, how could I have understood life, death, dying, and being born again, tested by fire, re-claiming life... You touch the material, and you begin to be transformed."

Sheherezade Alam

Through timeless forms and lustre glazes, Sheherezade Alam articulated centuries of earthenware traditions on her potter's wheel. Her fascination with the deep history of the craft – stretching back to neolithic Chinese pottery and the vestiges of the Indus valley civilisations – shaped her artistic sensibilities and provided endless inspiration throughout her career.

For Alam, clay possessed an innate, vital energy. Just as it is transformed by the potter's touch, Alam believed she herself was equally shaped by the contact of clay. Throwing and animating her vessels on the wheel represented a symbolic communion with the earth, where life begins, and ends.

Sheherezade Alam in her studio *circa* 1983
Photo: Zahoor ul Akhlaq
Image courtesy Nurjahan Akhlaq

The South Asia Edit presents thirty-two ceramics from Alam's 1990s practice. Drawing on the silhouettes of traditional South Asian vessels, across dishes, vases, *matka* pots and *urali* bowls, the potter reimagined these forms on her own terms. Blending metallic lustres, speckled glazes and fluted rims, Alam was known to tirelessly experiment with materials, palettes and finishes. The exquisite profiles and rich materiality of this collection from the estate of the artist reveal Alam's mastery of the wheel and the firing process.

'Alam returns to the functionality of standard domestic shapes in North Indian culture - the water-urn, the bread basket, the clay-lamp - to reinterpret their dimensions from the perspective of an artist seeking to keep such shapes alive.' (Sara Suleri, *Sheherezade Alam*, Yale Institute of Sacred Music Worship and the Arts, Art Asia Archive)

Assembled together, these vessels form a precious hoard of the potter's inimitable craft. Through her contemporary reinterpretation of ancestral traditions, Alam breathes new life into one of humanity's oldest practices. The works on view speak to the artist's custodial relationship with the cultural and material heritage of South Asia.

Sheherezade Alam in her studio *circa* 1983
Photo: Zahoor ul Akhlaq
Image courtesy Nurjahan Akhlaq

Born in Lahore in 1948, Sheherezade Alam graduated with a diploma in Design from the National College of Arts in 1972. In 1983-4, she undertook post-graduate studies at West Surrey College of Art & Design, England, and worked in Cornwall and Wales with master potters including Clive Bowen and Takeshi Yasuda. Alam worked across stoneware, earthenware and porcelain and is considered one of Pakistan's premier potters. She shared her passion for the craft widely through her teaching practice, at her alma mater in Lahore; Bilkent University, Turkey; and Arcadia Co-op, Toronto. She permanently settled in Toronto from 1999, following the tragic deaths of her husband and eldest daughter. A fervent supporter of Pakistan's artistic heritage, she established the art collective LAAL in 2000 and the Jahan-e-Jahanara Centre for Traditional Arts for Children in 2009, institutions which preserve and promote the country's arts and crafts.

Works by Sheherezade Alam

55

SHEHEREZADE ALAM

1948 - 2022

Large vase with flared neck

Stoneware with metallic glaze

38 cm. (14 ⅞ in.) high

25 cm. (9 ⅞ in.) diam.

Executed *circa* 1990s

56

SHEHEREZADE ALAM

1948 - 2022

Large vase with flared neck

Stoneware with turquoise glaze body and metallic glaze rim

35.9 cm. (14 ⅛ in.) high

27.6 cm. (10 ⅞ in.) diam.

Executed *circa* 1990s

57

SHEHEREZADE ALAM

1948 - 2022

Dome lidded vessel

Stoneware with blue and black glazes

22.5 cm. (8 ⅞ in.) high

26.5 cm. (10 ⅜ in.) diam.

Executed *circa* 1990s

58

SHEHEREZADE ALAM

1948 - 2022

Small bowl with quatrefoil rim

Stoneware with metallic lustre

7.5 cm. (3 in.) high

9.9 cm. (3 ⅞ in.) diam.

Executed *circa* 1990s

59

SHEHEREZADE ALAM

1948 - 2022

Small bowl with foliate rim

Stoneware, the interior with green glaze

6 cm. (2 ⅜ in.) high

11 cm. (4 ⅜ in.) diam.

Executed *circa* 1990s

60

SHEHEREZADE ALAM

1948 - 2022

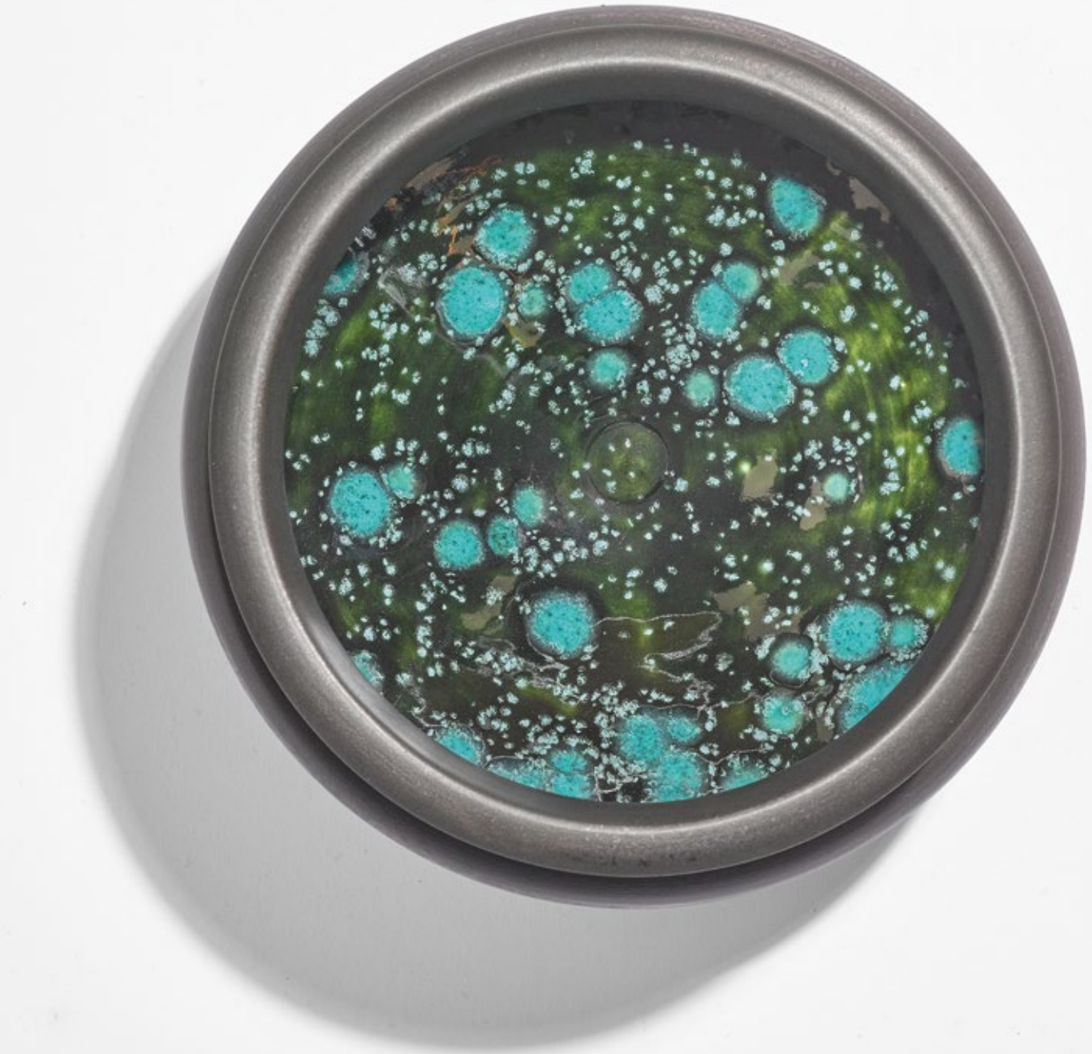
Bell-shaped hookah base

Stoneware with metallic glaze

22.5 cm. (8 ⅞ in.) high

18.1 cm. (7 ⅛ in.) diam.

Executed *circa* 1990s



61

SHEHEREZADE ALAM

1948 - 2022

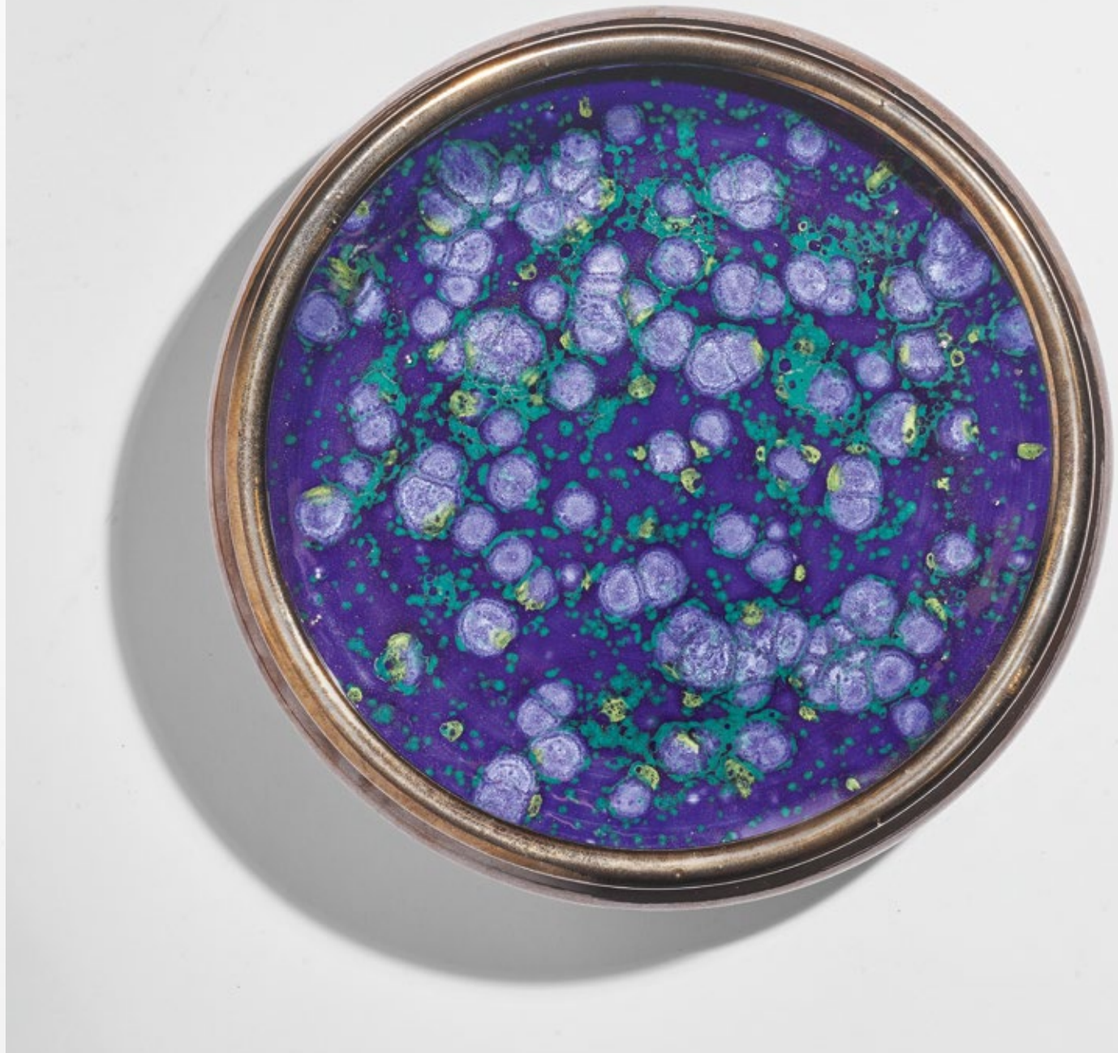
Urali bowl

White earthenware, the interior with green and turquoise glazes

9.2 cm. (3 ⅝ in.) high

20.5 cm. (8 ⅛ in.) diam.

Executed *circa* 1990s



62

SHEHEREZADE ALAM

1948 - 2022

Large urali bowl

White earthenware, the interior with blue and green glazes

8 cm. (3 ⅛ in.) high

33.5 cm. (13 ⅛ in.) diam.

Executed *circa* 1990s

63

SHEHEREZADE ALAM

1948 - 2022

Vessel with flared rim

White earthenware, the interior with ‘hare’s fur’ glaze

5 cm. (2 in.) high

18.9 cm. (7 ⅜ in.) diam.

Executed *circa* 1990s

64

SHEHEREZADE ALAM

1948 - 2022

Small matka vessel

Stoneware, the upper part with metallic glaze

10.4 cm. (4 ⅛ in.) high

10.5 cm. (4 ⅛ in.) diam.

Executed *circa* 1990s

65

SHEHEREZADE ALAM

1948 - 2022

Small matka vessel

Stoneware, the upper part with metallic glaze

11 cm. (4 ⅜ in.) high

12 cm. (4 ¾ in.) diam.

Executed *circa* 1990s

66

SHEHEREZADE ALAM

1948 - 2022

Large bowl with quatrefoil rim

White earthenware, the rim with metallic glaze, the interior with crackle glaze

5.8 cm. (2 ¼ in.) high

33.6 cm. (13 ¼ in.) diam.

Executed *circa* 1990s

68

SHEHEREZADE ALAM

1948 - 2022

Bowl with quatrefoil rim

White earthenware, the rim with metallic glaze, the interior with crackle glaze

10.2 cm. (4 in.) high

26 cm. (10 ¼ in.) diam.

Executed *circa* 1990s

67

SHEHEREZADE ALAM

1948 - 2022

Large bowl with quatrefoil rim

Stoneware with metallic glaze

12 cm. (4 ¾ in.) high

39 cm. (15 ⅜ in.) diam.

Executed *circa* 1990s

69

SHEHEREZADE ALAM

1948 - 2022

Large bowl with quatrefoil rim

White earthenware, the rim with metallic glaze, the interior with crackle glaze

8.5 cm. (3 ⅜ in.) high

41.1 cm. (16 ⅛ in.) diam.

Executed *circa* 1990s

70

SHEHEREZADE ALAM

1948 - 2022

Small vessel

Stoneware with metallic glaze

7 cm. (2 ¾ in.) high

15.5 cm. (6 ⅛ in.) diam.

Executed *circa* 1990s

72

SHEHEREZADE ALAM

1948 - 2022

Matka vessel

Stoneware with metallic glaze

14 cm. (5 1/2 in.) high

18 cm. (7 ⅛ in.) diam.

Executed *circa* 1990s

71

SHEHEREZADE ALAM

1948 - 2022

Plate

Stoneware with metallic glaze

2.9 cm. (1 ¼ in.) high

22 cm. (8 ⅝ in.) diam.

Executed *circa* 1990s

73

SHEHEREZADE ALAM

1948 - 2022

Circular bowl

White earthenware, the interior with speckled glaze

6.3 cm. (2 ½ in.) high

22 cm. (8 ⅝ in.) diam.

Executed *circa* 1990s

74

SHEHEREZADE ALAM

1948 - 2022

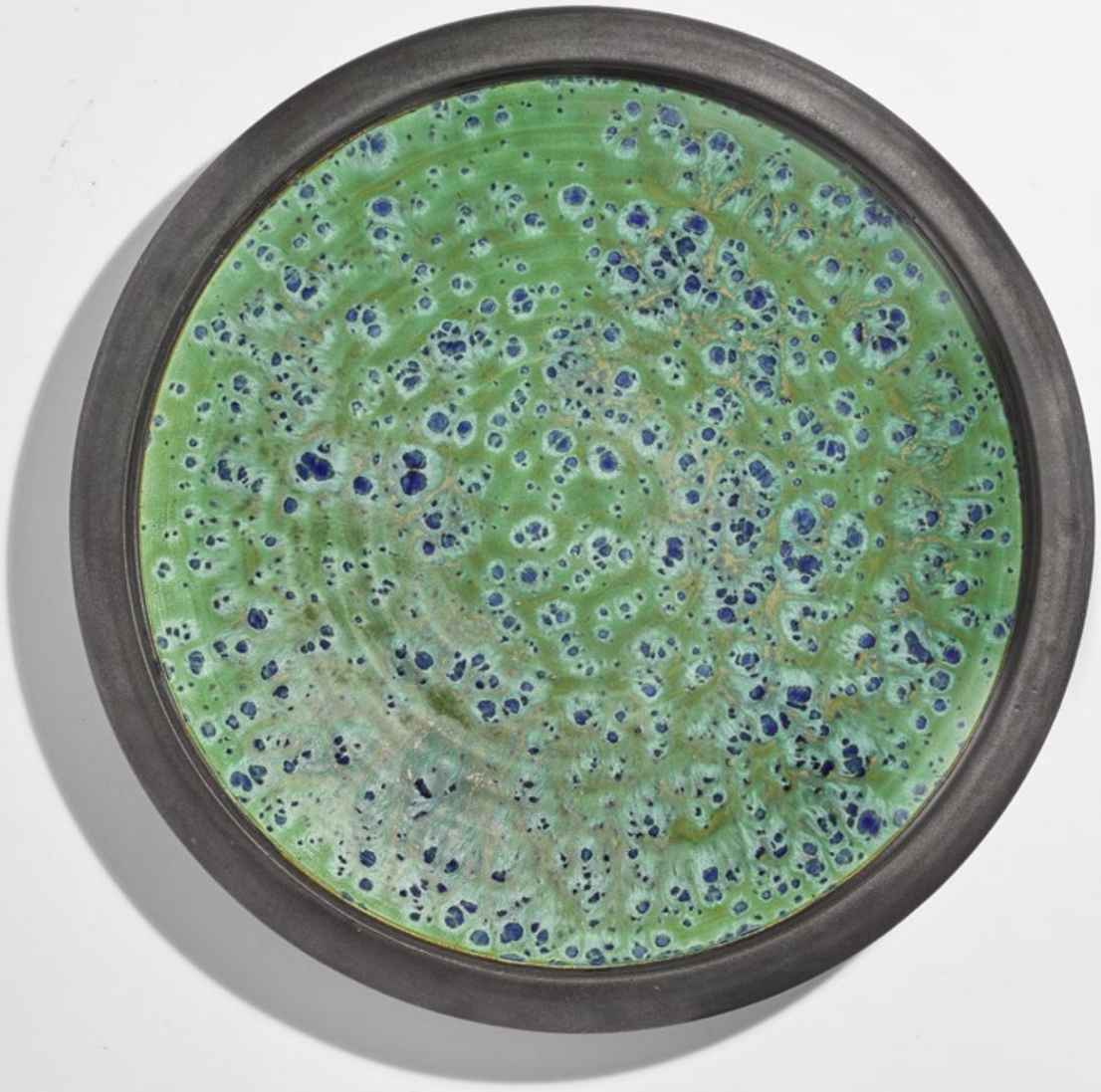
Circular bowl

Stoneware, the interior with blue and turquiose glazes

8 cm. (3 ¼ in.) high

22.3 cm. (8 ⅞ in.) diam.

Executed *circa* 1990s



75

SHEHEREZADE ALAM

1948 - 2022

Large circular dish

White earthenware, the interior with green and blue glazes

4.7 cm. (1 ⅞ in.) high

39.5 cm. (15 ⅝ in.) diam.

Executed *circa* 1990s

76

SHEHEREZADE ALAM

1948 - 2022

Matka vessel

Stoneware with metallic glaze

14.9 cm. (5 7⁄8 in.) high

20.5 cm. (8 1⁄8 in.) diam.

Executed *circa* 1990s

77

SHEHEREZADE ALAM

1948 - 2022

Matka vessel

Stoneware with metallic glaze

20 cm. (7 7⁄8 in.) high

19.5 cm. (7 5⁄8 in.) diam.

Executed *circa* 1990s

78

SHEHEREZADE ALAM

1948 - 2022

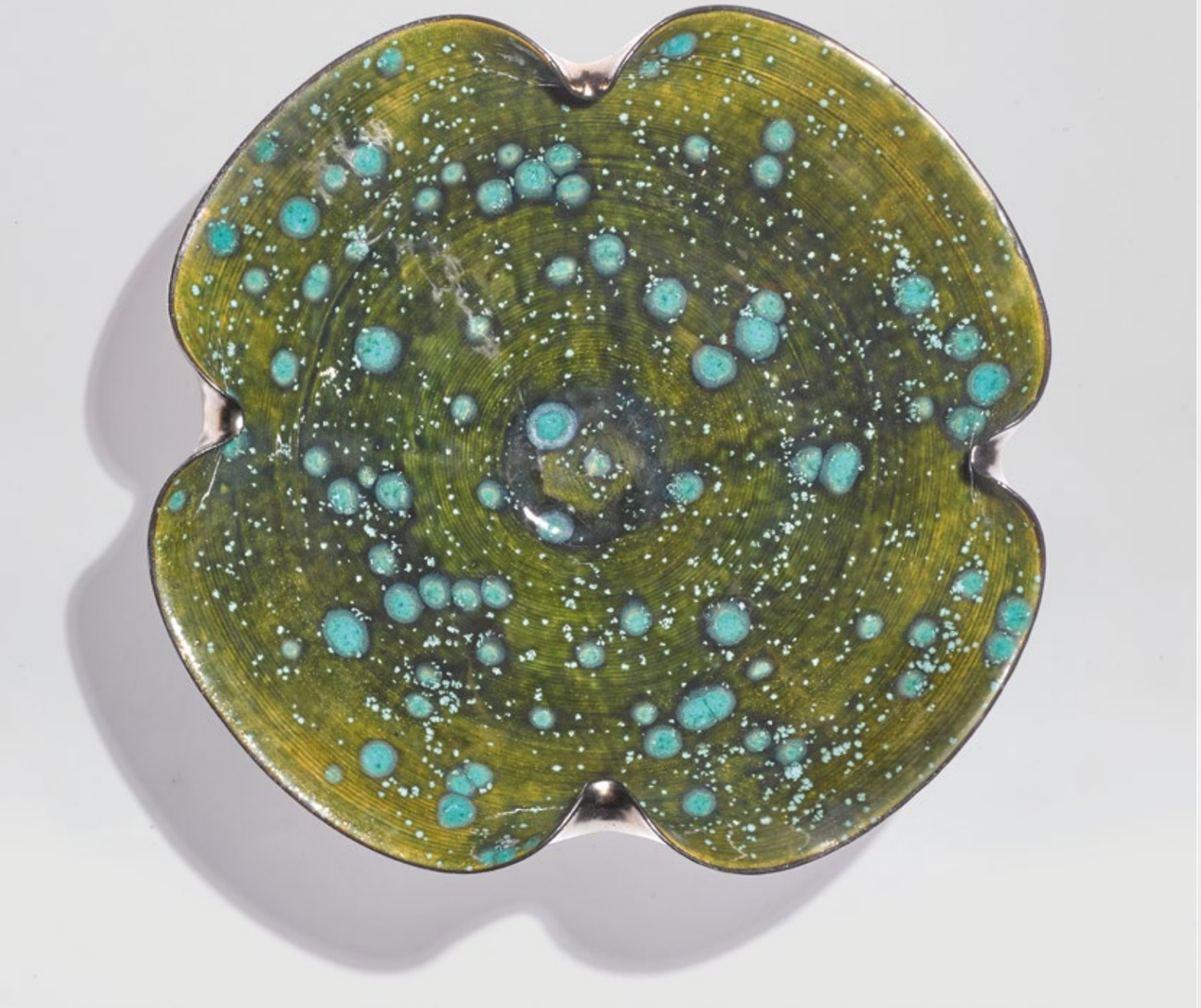
Surahi vessel

Stoneware with metallic glaze, glazed interior

19.5 cm. (7 5⁄8 in.) high

15 cm. (5 7⁄8 in.) diam.

Executed *circa* 1990s



79

SHEHEREZADE ALAM

1948 - 2022

Large bowl with quatrefoil rim

White earthenware, the interior with green and turquoise glazes

11.5 cm. (4 ½ in.) high

39.5 cm. (15 ½ in.) diam.

Executed *circa* 1990s

80

SHEHEREZADE ALAM

1948 - 2022

Large bowl with quatrefoil rim

White earthenware, the interior with blue and green glazes

12.2 cm. (4 ⅞ in.) high

44.2 cm. (17 ⅜ in.) diam.

Executed *circa* 1990s

81

SHEHEREZADE ALAM

1948 - 2022

Small circular bowl

White earthenware, the interior with metallic glaze

5.7 cm. (2 ¼ in.) high

13.9 cm. (5 ½ in.) diam.

Executed *circa* 1990s

82

SHEHEREZADE ALAM

1948 - 2022

Small flared circular bowl

White earthenware with metallic glaze

5.5 cm. (2 ⅛ in.) high

15.5 cm. (6 ⅛ in.) diam.

Executed *circa* 1990s

83

SHEHEREZADE ALAM

1948 - 2022

Small flared circular vessel

White earthenware with metallic glaze

9.6 cm. (3 ¾ in.) high

16.3 cm. (6 ⅜ in.) diam.

Executed *circa* 1990s

84

SHEHEREZADE ALAM

1948 - 2022

Small bowl with trefoil rim

White earthenware with metallic glaze

5.2 cm. (2 ⅛ in.) high

12 cm. (4 ¾ in.) diam.

Executed *circa* 1990s

85

SHEHEREZADE ALAM

1948 - 2022

Urali bowl with pinched rim

Stoneware with metallic lustre

8 cm. (3 ¼ in.) high

21.5 cm. (8 ½ in.) diam.

Executed *circa* 1990s

86

SHEHEREZADE ALAM

1948 - 2022

Urali bowl

Stoneware with metallic glaze

10.5 cm. (4 ⅛ in.) high

23.2 cm. (9 ⅛ in.) diam.

Executed *circa* 1990s

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This Page
Sheherezade Alam. Circular bowl (detail)

Opposite Page
Mohan Samant. *Blind Singer with Swaramandala* (detail)